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THE INDEPENDENT

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WEDNESDAY 14 AUGUST 1996

WEATHER: Cloudy and cool

40p (R45P)

Complacency under fire

Tory MPs back down
on imposing gun ban
in wake of Dunblane

JASON BENNETTO
and ANTHONY BEVINS

Five Tory MPs and the shooting lobby stood isolated and besieged last night in their refusal to support the banning of handguns in the aftermath of the Dunblane massacre.

The decision by a House of Commons committee not to recommend outlawing all pistols and revolvers because it was "too costly and impractical" was greeted with a torrent of outrage from bereaved parents, police, anti-firearms campaigners and politicians.

The division was highlighted by the publication of a minority report by the five Labour members of the Home Affairs Committee who wanted a ban on all handguns but had been out-voted by the six Conservative members.

It also became increasingly clear that the Government, fearing the strength of the gun lobby within its own ranks, is prepared to hide behind the inquiry into the Dunblane shooting by Lord Cullen as cover for firm action. The Government yesterday pledged that it would enact any proposals for a gun crackdown offered by the inquiry, which is due to publish next month.

The report, *Possession of Handguns*, ruled out a series of proposals to reform the existing gun laws and concluded that a handgun ban would produce, at best, a "minimal" improvement in public safety, and warned against "panic legislation".

It questioned the impact of a ban by asking: "What would be the point of a total ban on the lawful holding of handguns if there remained easy access to

unlawful handguns, and easy access both lawful and unlawful to powerful rifles, or to shotguns which, given time to reload, would have the same result?"

It argued that a ban could cost £17m in lost ammunition sales and accessories, and £140m in compensation to 200,000 handgun owners.

It also said a ban would effectively bring an end to pistol shooting as a sport pursuit.

John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, condemned the committee and said: "This is a report for the public, not for the vested interests of the gun lobby. People want a ban; it's commonsense; they can't understand why anyone should want to keep a lethal weapon in the comfort of their own home."

John Crozier, whose five-year-old daughter Emma was one of the 16 children murdered with their teacher by gunman Thomas Hamilton at Dunblane in March, claimed the committee had bowed to the powerful gun lobby. "I cannot believe this insult to the children and their teacher," he said.

But the committee's Tory chairman Sir Ivan Lawrence accused his critics of "talking out of the back of their heads".

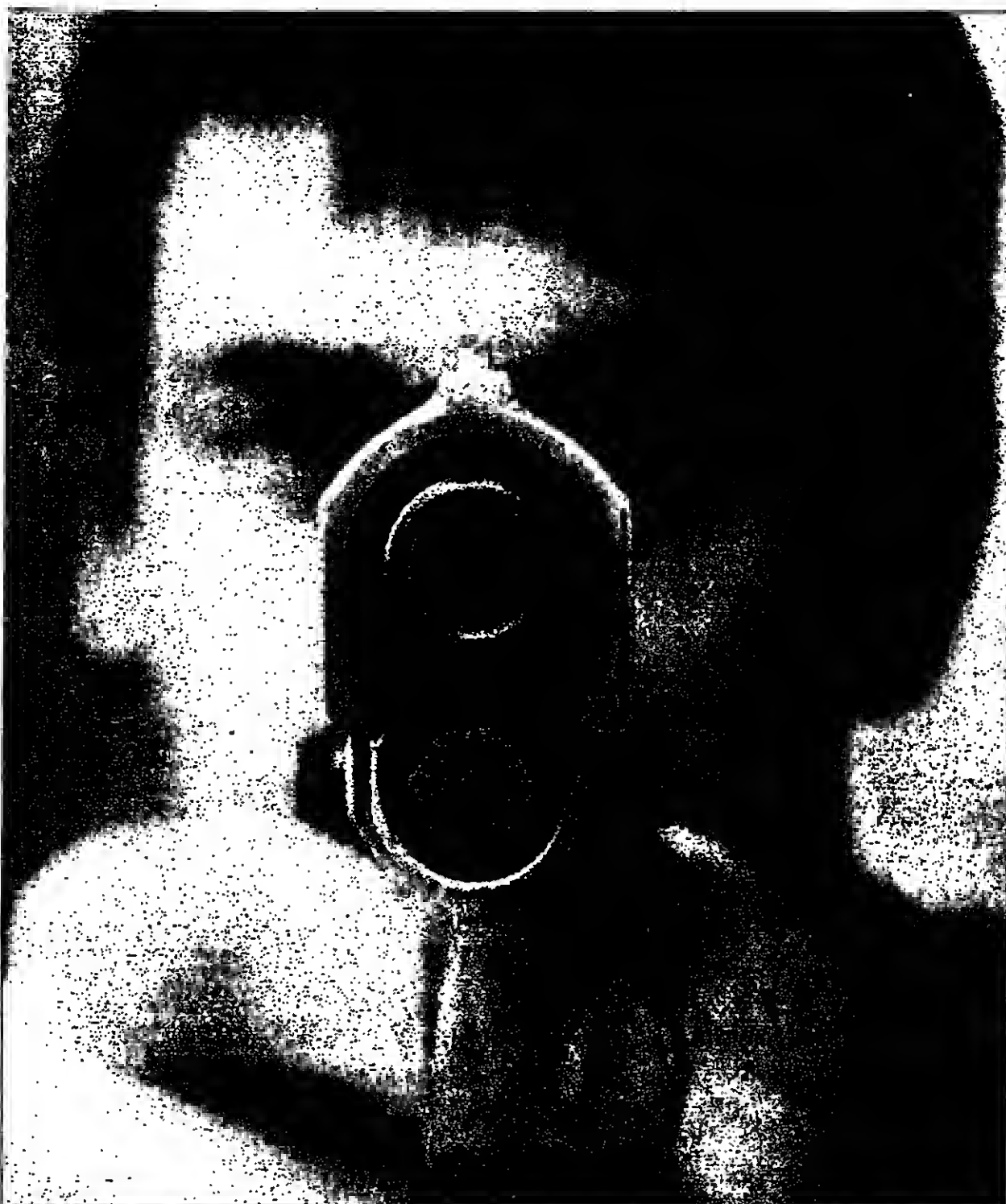
He added: "I am not convinced that overwhelmingly the public are in favour of a ban on legally held guns. If by banning legally held handguns we could stop [Dunblane killer] Hamilton, that would have been easy and we would have done that."

Public opinion, however, appears to be overwhelmingly behind a ban on private ownership of handguns with a recent poll showing that nearly three quarters of those questioned favoured the weapons being outlawed.

The NOP/Sunday Times poll last month of 1,565 adults found that 72 per cent supported a ban compared to 21 per cent who were against one.

In response to the report and the remarkable backlash it has caused, David Maclean, the Home Office minister said: "We will not shirk our duty."

Mr Maclean explained: "There's a whole host of things Lord Cullen has to investigate that politicians in the Westminster hot-house cannot investigate."



Too costly to ban? A 9mm pistol similar to one used by Thomas Hamilton at Dunblane

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

But he then promised not only that a parliamentary slot had been left open for legislation - but that it would be filled as quickly as possible after Lord Cullen reports.

Senior Labour sources suspect that the Government has been forced to pledge action by the sheer weight of the public revulsion to Dunblane.

The Association of Chief Police Officers pronounced itself "extremely disappointed" by the report's rejection of even a partial ban on the possession of handguns. Fred Broughton, the Police Federation's national chairman, called the report "desperately disappointing", saying it rejected virtually every constructive recommendation

put forward by the police. There were dissenting voices too within the Conservative Party. Former Tory minister David Mellor said the whole affair had been mishandled.

But the gun lobby welcomed the report's general thrust. Pat Johnson, of the British Shooting Sport Councils, said: "Our view has always been that if

there's a calm, dispassionate look at the facts, the committee would be almost irresistibly drawn to the sort of conclusions they were drawn to today."

Jan McConchie, general secretary of the National Pistol Association, called the report "a commonsense judgment on behalf of the shooting community".

A-level pass rate rises by 2 per cent

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

A rise in the A-level pass rate of just under 2 percentage points - one of the biggest improvements for seven years - is expected to be revealed tomorrow when more than 300,000 candidates receive their results.

Exam officials believe that the provisional figure, understood to be 1.8 percentage points, is low enough to enable them to ward off criticism from traditionalists that A-level standards are falling.

A similar improvement in results was achieved in both 1992 and 1994. The highest improvement was in 1994 when the final figure was 1.9. Last year's increase was only 1.1 percentage points.

There has been an increase of between 1 and 2 percentage points in the A-level pass rate in each of the last 15 years. More than four out of five candidates now achieve a pass. However, the proportion of candidates securing a grade A is rising more slowly.

This is the first year in which significant numbers of candidates have taken modular A-levels, in which they sit a series of tests over two years plus a final exam rather than one big exam at the end of their course.

Traditionalists had predicted that the pass rate would rise because candidates are allowed to resit modules but first figures suggest that the effect of the change has been limited.

Although modular exams may have improved the pass rate because weak candidates who fail modules can drop out or resit them, they may make it harder for candidates to secure A grades for which a consistently high performance is required over two years.

Only about one-quarter of all

candidates took the modular exams, mainly in English, science and maths.

Both the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the examination boards point to other reasons for candidates' improving performance besides changes in the format.

One is the improved performance of girls at A-level. Since 1989, the percentage of girls gaining three or more A-level passes has gone up from 10.4 to 16.4 per cent. The equivalent figures for boys are 11.3 and 15 per cent.

In a recent paper, the authority suggests that another explanation may be an increase of 20 per cent in the last 30 years in the proportion of candidates in the top two social classes. "Since performance at A-level and university entry correlates with socioeconomic grouping, the growth rates may well be related," it says.

Alan Smithers, Brunel University's professor of public policy, said: "One reason for improving A-level results may be changes in content to include subjects such as sports studies and media studies. Another may be different types of exam including coursework and modules. "Perhaps the key factor may be what examiners regard as acceptable. Each year they look back to what happened last year. Candidates on the borderline are rarely put down."

Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, said: "If the A-level results are better than expected then, overall, more people will make the grade and there will be fewer places in clearing."

Improved results would cause no difficulties in most university departments. The only problem might be over places for medicine and dentistry where there are strict targets to be met.

Vicar is murdered in churchyard

REBECCA FOWLER



Christopher Gray: Found bleeding to death

A young vicar with a "brilliant future" was murdered in a brutal stabbing early yesterday morning in the grounds of his parish church in Liverpool, and police were last night searching for a man they describe as "highly dangerous".

Christopher Gray, 32, the vicar of St Margaret's Church in Anfield, Liverpool, a gifted scholar who had insisted on working in a tough urban parish, was discovered bleeding to death by neighbours, after they heard a cry.

Following the attack, a young mother of two in a house near the vicarage fought off a knife-wielding intruder who burst into her home. The intruder

tried to abduct her before stealing her red Ford Escort car and fleeing.

The Rt Rev David Sheppard, the Bishop of Liverpool, led a service for the shocked congregation at the church in place of Mr Gray last night. He paid a glowing tribute to the priest, whom he ordained four-and-a-half years ago, after the vicar's parents, who were on a walking holiday, were informed of their son's death.

The bishop said: "The death of this much-valued priest is a tremendous loss to me personally, and to all of us in the diocese. At 32 years of age, one of the ablest priests of his generation, Christopher Gray had very special gifts of scholarship."

As a student at Oxford University Mr Gray received a first, "with congratulations", in his history finals. He was also a talented linguist, musician and writer, but he was determined to face the challenges of an inner city church in a socially deprived area.

Mr Gray had returned shortly after midnight to his vicarage, in Tuebrook, from a function entertaining foreign visitors in Liverpool. At about 12.40 neighbours heard him speaking to another man whose voice became raised.

They saw the man run from the scene near the church, and he then went to a house in a nearby road. He forced his way past the woman who opened the door, threatened her with a knife, and took her car keys.

According to Chief Inspector Elmore Davies, leading the police murder inquiry, the woman was so determined to protect her two young children, who were also in the house, she found the strength to fight off the man when he attempted to abduct her.

The police revealed that the man they are seeking, named as Terence Storey, 31, had received advice from Mr Gray in recent weeks, since he was released from Liverpool's Walton Prison.

For the church the tragedy illustrates the growing risk facing clergy who have traditionally kept an open-door policy. The Bishop of Liverpool said the risk for vicars had become "part of the job" in diocese across the

country as Britain has grown more violent.

He said: "If you start to say it is more likely to happen in one parish than another, you can't be sure of that. We have been advising clergy not to make appointments with people when they are alone in the house, and we know Christopher was trying to make sure people were present."

"One or two of my colleagues among the bishops have spoken to me in recent months about the difficulty of asking clergy and their families to move into particular parishes," he added. "But we are determined we will stay in every parish in the country. Chris was there very much by his own choice, he wanted to be there."

QUICKLY

Westwood for Dior?
Vivienne Westwood, one of Britain's most anarchic and irreverent designers, was yesterday tipped to take over the top French fashion house, Dior, replacing Italian Gianfranco Ferré. Page 3

Weighty problem
Britons are getting fatter, women are drinking too much, and children are still taking up smoking, in spite of the Government's targets for a healthier nation. Page 5

CS Gas adopted
Police patrol officers throughout England and Wales are to be allowed to carry CS sprays after a six-month trial was deemed a success. Page 6

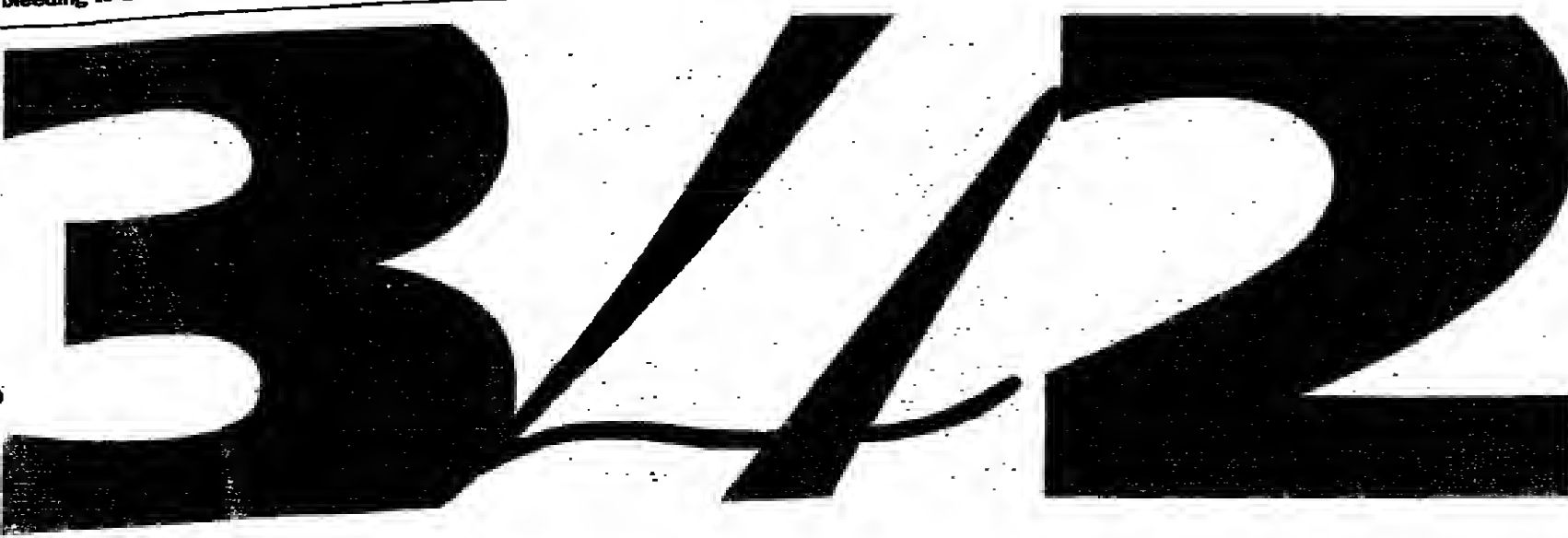
Chechnya ceasefire
Russian and Chechen commanders were reported to have agreed to a ceasefire yesterday, the first sign that the bloody battles over Grozny might be coming to a close. Page 9

Convention lifts off
The Republican Convention in San Diego was in buoyant mood, turning fire on President Bill Clinton, after General Colin Powell and Nancy Reagan reinforced an image of moderation and compassion. Page 10

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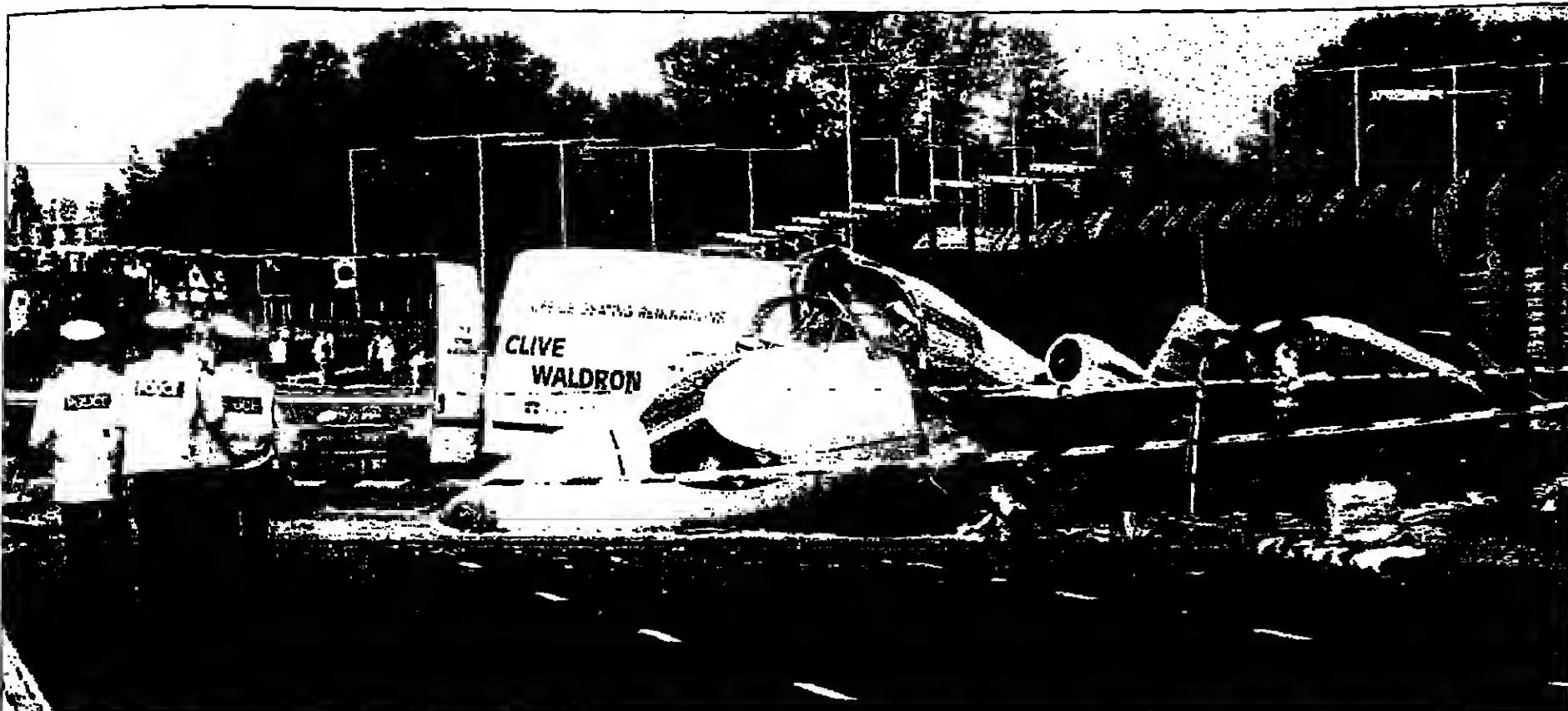


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news



Road block: Wreckage lying across the A40 in west London after an aircraft landing at RAF Northolt crashed through a fence into a van yesterday. The van's driver, Gary Jewel, escaped with minor injuries, as did the jet's captain and its passenger, actress Lisa Hogan. The co-pilot was being treated for a fractured nose and severe cuts. Photograph: PA

Electronic spying gleans world's 'top level secrets'

DUNCAN CAMPBELL

A new book published in New Zealand today is likely to irritate Western intelligence chiefs, with its detailed account of the global electronic intelligence network being used by the English-speaking nations to spy on the world's communications – from top-level diplomatic and military messages to babble on the Internet.

The book, *Secret Power*, by political campaigner Nicky Hager, is based on interviews with past and present intelligence employees who have worked on the top secret new system, called Echelon. The system is used by Britain's electronic spy agency GCHQ, as well as by its American, Australian and Canadian counterparts.

To avoid the risks of another *Spycatcher* legal action by the British government or by the

New Zealand government on its behalf, the publishers of *Secret Power* maintained a news blackout about their plans until last night, when copies were released in New Zealand cities.

The New Zealand whistleblowers describe Echelon as an automated international surveillance system, which integrates secret monitoring stations across the globe using the intelligence agencies' own network of satellites and listening bases. At each base, computers known as Echelon Dictionaries automatically search through intercepted messages according to target lists of subjects and people.

The significance of the new system, says Hager, is that before Echelon different countries and different stations knew what was being intercepted and to whom it was being sent. Now, even security cleared up-

erators may not know what raw information is being sent out, or to whom.

The Dictionary computers hold lists of different categories of intercept available on the system, identified by code. The targets in the South Pacific include Japanese commercial and diplomatic messages as well as regional communications and the operations of Russian fishing boats and Antarctic bases.

According to operators, Dictionary search results appear "almost instantaneously".

By 1992, according to a former national security agency chief, the overall international system was processing 2 million intercepted messages every hour.

An unnamed New Zealand Echelon operator said that while the Americans have access to everything collected by its allies, they do not share all their information. "The intel-

ligence agencies can all apply for numbers on each other's Dictionaries. The hardest to deal with are the Americans. [There are] more hoops to jump through, unless it is in their interest in which case they'll do it for you."

The operatives say that Dictionary computers have been installed throughout the world at listening stations and intelligence agency headquarters. GCHQ's London Dictionary computers scan telex and data messages passing through British Telecom's international network.

In a foreword to the book, David Lange, who was Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1984-89, says that much of the book's information has come as a surprise to him, despite having taken a decision which allowed the Echelon project to go ahead in New Zealand.

"An astonishing number of people," Mr Lange says, had told the author "things that I as Prime Minister in charge of the intelligence services was never told... It is an outrage that I and other ministers were told so little. This raises the question of to whom those concerned saw themselves ultimately answerable."

Mr Lange admits that he grudgingly authorised the construction of a New Zealand satellite monitoring station in 1984 but says he had no idea that thereby "we had been committed to an international integrated electronic network".

The importance of the new Pacific stations linking into the Echelon system, says Hager, was that after the late 1980s, Britain and America could no longer listen to all the world's communications solely from stations on their own territories.

Virus plagues Microsoft Word

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Editor

Have you seen a wazzu lately? If not, then count yourself lucky – for the newest virus to hit the world of computers is spreading like wildfire, since its appearance around the beginning of June.

Sightings have already been reported in the UK, US, Israel and Iceland of the latest "macro virus", which infects documents written with Microsoft's Word word-processing program – possibly the most widely-used piece of office software in the world.

The Wazzu virus randomly moves, changes or adds words to a document, and occasionally inserts the word "wazzu". It is spread by opening an "infected" document, though there is no way for the hapless user to know ahead of time if the document poses a risk, unless they have one of a new breed of virus-checking programs to guard against it.

The effect would be disastrous in a large document, such as a contract, which could be riddled with gibberish. Also, any further documents written with an infected program will also wazzu at random. Anybody who receives a Word document written by an infected program will in turn be infected too.

"Wazzu appears to be the most advanced macro virus to date," said Shannon Jenkins, of Touchstone Software, in London. "And it is spreading like wildfire."

"It is already the second most common macro virus," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at Dr Solomon's Anti-virus in Aylesbury.

Macro viruses consist of a series of instructions embedded in a document which tell the user's machine to automatically carry out various instructions. Unlike standard viruses, macro viruses are not limited to one particular make of computer; they can affect PCs or Apple Macintoshes. It can be spread by Word files sent in e-mail, or on floppy discs.

Such viruses are only possible because Microsoft has increasingly made Word less like a replacement for the typewriter and more a programmers' tool, which can carry out independent instructions such as opening files or writing words without the user's intervention. Millions of copies are used worldwide, but most people use only a fraction of the program's capability.

"To consider taking out the functionality [that makes macro viruses feasible] would be a step back for the industry," said Stuart Anderson, Microsoft UK's support services manager. "I mean, can you have too much functionality?"

Committee on guns: Chairman hits back at opponents of decision not to endorse ban

Critics are accused of hysteria

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Critics of the Commons home affairs committee decision to reject a ban on the domestic possession of handguns – including the Association of Chief Police Officers – were being hysterical, Tory chairman Sir Ivan Lawrence said yesterday.

Snatching the chance of a break from a London court hearing in which he was sitting as Recorder, the backbench QC judged that his critics were "talking out of the back of

their heads". It was a typically robust and forthright response from Sir Ivan, one of the most resilient and thick-skinned men in the House. One Labour MP who has watched him closely over recent years describes him as a "mega-workaholic".

Some Tory colleagues are surprised that a man of Sir Ivan's undoubted ability had never been a minister. Nevertheless, Sir Ivan has proved there is a role and a political purpose on the back benches. And he has filled it in a way that will please many of his backbench

colleagues on the guns issue.

For most Tories, it is taken as read that the gun lobby – like the hunting lobby, farming, big and small business – have to be deferred to, which is why the Government wants to hide behind Lord Cullen if a guns crackdown is required in the wake of Dunblane.

Once upon a time, at a private lunch party held by Alastair Goodlad, now Chief Whip, perennial rebel Alan Clark turned up wearing an anti-hunting tie. During the meal, Mr Goodlad became so in-

censed by this provocation that he picked up a pair of scissors and cut off Mr Clark's tie at the knot. It was a jolly jape, but it also tells us much about the nature of the Tory hunt – and where its loyalty lies.

For the Tories on the home affairs select committee, the point would not have needed making. No caucus would have been necessary for John Greenway, MP for the Yorkshire constituency of Ryedale; Warren Hawkesley, MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge and owner of a country house hotel near

Walslipool; Dame Jill Knight, doyenne of the Tory backbench 1922 Committee; and Walter Sweeney, MP for the most marginal Vale of Glamorgan. The one hope of Tory defection on the committee, which has an in-built one-vote Tory majority, was David Ashby, the colourful MP for North West Leicestershire – a liberal case loser and one of the few Tory MPs to have been deselected by his local party as a candidate for the next election. In the event, Mr Ashby was so independent-minded that he went with the pack.

THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The 48-page majority report on firearms refuses to ban handguns on grounds of cost, practicality and effectiveness. It also rules out other, wide ranging measures, opting instead for changes of existing structures and improved police scrutiny.
- The six Tory MPs on the Home Affairs Select Committee report Possession of Handguns decided: ■ Banning the possession of all guns would be "too far reaching and ineffective" as it would not prevent unstable individuals from gaining access to guns illegally. It would also prevent farms, game shooting and clay pigeon shooting.
- A ban on handguns was turned down because it would have "trade, employment and cost implications". Estimates suggest the sales of pistol ammunition and accessories could be worth £1.7m.
- Compensation for confiscated handguns might cost £140m.
- The Tory members said "panic legislation" should be avoided.
- They conclude that banning of all guns would bring only "minimal improvement to public safety."
- They also reject banning of handguns except those used in sports events and single shot models because they doubt it would "make a mass killing any less likely".
- Holding handguns in a centrally stored area, such as a gun dealer or club, was ruled out because the committee did not believe that a "determined criminal would be prevented from using a weapon for criminal purposes".
- Keeping handguns separate from ammunition unless they were on licensed premises was turned down because of "practical difficulties".
- A proposal for restricting the number of handguns an individual can hold was rejected.
- The committee found "significant practical difficulties" with "possession testing".
- There should not be a legal requirement upon clubs to pass to the police details of applications, which have been rejected.
- Positive recommendations included: ■ GPs should supply medical information about a person applying for a gun certificate and the application form should be checked and signed by the doctor. The British Medical Association, however, strongly rejected this proposal.
- A nationwide system for sharing information between police forces should be set up. Names of offenders involved in violence, threats or intimidation should be checked against records of firearm and shotgun possession holders.
- Two references should be provided. The references should then be questioned by the police.
- More needs to be done by Oxfords and Essex to detect and prevent the illegal possession of firearms by the general public.
- Police officers should keep about the status of firearms recovered after crime.
- Police should be given a right of entry into all gun clubs.
- Police officers should have the power to revoke gun certificates on the basis that applicants no longer had good reason for possession.

Labour 'minority' makes voice heard

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The five Labour members on the committee of MPs investigating firearms were furious with their Tory colleagues' refusal to recommend outlawing most handguns. In an unusual move they have published their own "minority report".

Their recommendations include: ■ To "dramatically reduce" the ownership of guns in private hands. The committee noted the possible emergence of a gun culture based on the ready availability of firearms. It also highlighted "a powerful shooting lobby which is unlikely to accept any serious restrictions".

■ The private possession of handguns should be banned. The Labour MPs argue that although a large proportion of crime involving firearms are

committed with illegally held guns reducing the number in circulation can only improve matters. Calls for partial bans were ruled out as "unpracticable".

■ Exceptions could be made to specific activities and occupations such as RSPCA inspectors, veterinary surgeons, knacker-men and athletic starting pistols.

■ A small number of guns clubs that can demonstrate that firearms used at the clubs could be securely kept, at a central point, and in such a way they do not pose a public risk, may be considered as exceptions to the general ban.

■ Methods of reducing the number of legally held shotguns must be considered as several deaths have been caused by these weapons recently.

■ Shotgun certificates should no longer be granted to people who live in towns and cities, where there is not justifiable use.

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SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

The RUC was last night accused of conducting a witch-hunt against officers who belong to the Protestant Orange Order. Four men, a sergeant and three part-timers, have been suspended after claims they took part in parades in Co Fermanagh. Officers are not prohibited from belonging to any of the loyal orders – they include the Apprentice Boys and the Royal Black Institution – but they can face disciplinary action if they take part in parades.

Police confirmed four officers had been suspended from duty while the force's complaints and disciplinary branch investigate unspecified allegations. But Unionists claimed the suspensions were part of a move against policemen who are members of the various organisations.

As another postal strike went ahead today, the head of the Royal Mail warned its future was at stake. The managing director, Richard Dykes, who has just written outlining the latest offer to all the service's post workers, said rivals would not hesitate to exploit the disruption if it continued. Several local post services have begun since Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, temporarily suspended the Royal Mail's monopoly on letters under £1.

Meanwhile, magistrates and crown courts could be disrupted next month if 2,000 administration workers vote to strike over a pay dispute. Members of the Civil and Public Services Association in the Crown Prosecution Service are being balloted on a week-long dispute in protest at a new performance-related pay offer. Louise Jury

Hospital trusts are on target to free more than £100m for extra clinical care, through efficiency savings aimed at excessive red tape and bureaucracy in the NHS, Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, said yesterday. But the announcement was marred by criticism from hospital managers, who say that the drive to cut administrative costs has compromised patient care in many parts of the country, while the health care unions said that the target of 5 per cent cuts set for this financial year could only be achieved at the expense of clinical excellence.

Mr Dorrell, for whom reducing bureaucracy in the NHS has become something of a personal crusade, rejected the claims. He said in addition to savings of £103m he was predicting – a cut in real terms of 8 per cent – health authorities would this year also reduce their administration costs by £39m. This, in turn was on top of £14m already saved in 1995-96. Liz Hunt

The poor state of the West Coast Main Line – scene of last week's Watford train crash – has been blamed by a passenger group for appalling standards of reliability. The North-western Rail Users Consultative Committee (RUCC) said the line failed to achieve the Passengers' Charter target of 90 per cent of arrivals on time or within 10 minutes, and sometimes sank to only 60 per cent punctuality.

It blamed the continuing need for renewal and modernisation of the track and signalling for many of the problems. Despite promises of investment, the plan "seems to have been slowed by the privatisation process". The criticism comes just days after the crash at Watford, in which one woman was killed and 60 people injured when a commuter train collided with an empty train. Louise Jury

Three collectors of birds' eggs were fined a total of £7,600 yesterday for illegal possession of rare specimens. They appeared before magistrates at Salisbury, Wilts, following a nationwide police and RSPB operation – codenamed Avocet – aimed at collectors and traders in rare bird eggs, which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Geoffrey Peirson, 48, a property developer, was fined a total of £5,000 with £80 costs, while businessman Anthony Parkes, also 48, and scaffolder Michael Sloane, 36, were respectively fined totals of £1,600 and £1,000.

The court heard that when police raided Parkes's home last September, they found more than 10,000 eggs – one of the largest seizures in Britain. It has been illegal since 1954 to collect wild birds' eggs. All three defendants were members of the Jourdain Society – a respected charity body which studies eggs. A society meeting in Salisbury was raided by police in July 1994. This gave rise to the later Operation Avocet, named after the rare bird which forms the logo of the RSPB.

Police have begun preparing for the arrival of French detectives investigating the sex killing of 13-year-old Caroline Dickinson on a school trip to Brittany. In her home town of Launceston, Devon and Cornwall force Inspector Paul Munns said he anticipated the French inquiries "could take some time".

The Launceston Community College pupil was raped and suffocated in a tiny dormitory at a hostel in Pleine Fougères on 18 July. She was among a party of 35 girls and five boys from the 1,200-pupil college on a week-long trip, together with five teachers. Insp Munns said it was not known whether the French police would require DNA samples from the boys on the trip. The cross-Channel initiative followed the release of 39-year-old drifter Patricia Pade, who confessed to Caroline's murder but was cleared when his DNA did not match samples taken from her.

A teenager was fined £350 for playing loud music in his car. Gary Smith, 19, appeared before Eastbourne magistrates yesterday, after the borough council brought a case against him under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. He denied a charge of playing a loud speaker in a car which could cause annoyance between 9pm and 8am.

Magistrates heard the case followed a crackdown by police in the town following residents' complaints. Smith, of Cobbold Avenue, Eastbourne, was stopped in his H-registered Vauxhall Cavalier, inside which police discovered a giant speaker on the back seat.

Ferry services between the Orkney Islands were crippled yesterday by the first of a series of one-day strikes in a row over crews' working hours. Nearly 30 ratings on three inter-island ferries stopped work in a dispute over their claim for "even time" working of two weeks on, two weeks off. The municipally-run ferry company argues this could only be achieved by hiring more ratings, and that would increase costs by more than 13 per cent.

A parking warden has made an official complaint against the police after he was arrested and handcuffed for trying to put a ticket on a van outside Buckingham Palace.

The warden defied a policeman who ordered him to ignore the vehicle, making a delivery at a goods entrance. But when the warden continued about his business, the policeman arrested him, handcuffed his hands behind his back and frogmarched him away. He was also told he was in danger of being charged with obstructing police before being released without any further action being taken.

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The Independent and the Independent on Sunday are - for the sixth year running - the only papers that will run all the official UCAS lists of university and college vacancies. Others may claim to carry them but they will carry only a selection, not the complete list. The first clearing listings will appear on Monday August 19. Thereafter they will appear on:

Monday 19 August
Wednesday 21 August
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Sunday 1 September
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UCAS



Will this be Dior's new look?

TAMM BLANCHARD
FASHION EDITOR

She was the Queen of Punk and reigns over British design as its most anarchic, irreverent champion. And now Vivienne Westwood is tipped to take over the king of French fashion houses, Christian Dior.

The rumours began that Westwood, who first made her mark on fashion with the punk store Sex and Seditionaries, would take over Dior when its present head Gianfranco Ferré announced his departure in July.

But yesterday the fashion world whispers suggested that Dior has already appointed Westwood and is waiting to make an official announcement at the October shows in Paris, when Ferré steps down.

Westwood denied the rumour. "We would like to declare untrue the rumours on Mrs Westwood's appointment at the House of Christian Dior," a statement from her British office said. "Mrs Westwood is very honoured by the rumour, but at the moment her main concern is to organise the ready-to-wear spring/summer 1997 show in Paris."

Dior, estimated to turn over more than £1bn a year, celebrates its 50th anniversary in 1997. Whether Westwood is its next couturier and whether she is given the job is almost irrelevant. The very fact that she is under consideration is a coup, not only for her but for the British fashion industry as a whole.

Design houses from New York to Milan come to London in search of talent fresh from our fashion colleges. Now, it seems, the brain-drain is reaching up into the highest echelons of the industry.

Since John Galiano took over at the French couture house Givenchy, British designers have looked set to conquer the fashion world, if not commercially, at least creatively. British talent has already cleaned up in just about every other aspect of the fashion industry: the editors of the two leading American fashion magazines, Anna Wintour and Liz Tiller, are both British, as are the leading fashion photographers Albert Watson, Craig McDean, Glen Luchford and David Sims.

British models are the most sought-after. Carolyn Park, one of the young British models who featured in the summer's Gucci campaign, is also making waves with the Italian label MaxMara, Hugo Boss, and Versace's diffusion line, Versus. One of the latest to hit the big time commercially is the Scottish aristocrat, Honor Fraser, currently to be seen in a whole host of international advertising campaigns that include Ungaro, Russell & Bromley, Rena Lange, and Isaac Mizrahi.



The honoured revolutionary: the rumour about Vivienne Westwood is itself a tribute to British fashion, now international. Dior may choose from her work, bottom left, following Ferré, middle left, and clockwise, from that of Alexander McQueen, Christian La Croix, Marc Jacobs and Jean-Paul Gaultier

Christian Dior is owned by LVMH (Louis Vuitton - Moët Hennessy) the same company that owns Givenchy, and Louis Vuitton. John Galiano's eccentricity and refusal to compromise has created more publicity for Givenchy than the house has seen since Audrey Hepburn wore its clothes in *Penny Lane*. And publicity is what it is all about: perfume sales are the key to haute couture, while jeans lines, accessories, sunglasses and hosiery

licences are increasingly the key to ready to wear. LVMH is in the market for a designer who will not so much make beautiful, wearable clothes, as a designer who will generate as much publicity as possible. Now, the rumour and speculation that accompanied the decision over who would take the reins at Givenchy are being repeated. Westwood would be a logical contender to design Dior. She, like Galiano, has a fascination and comprehensive

knowledge of the history of fashion which is important if a designer is to respect the history and tradition of Dior, the house which was founded in 1947 with the controversial New Look. She was in Paris during the haute couture season, attending the annual cocktail party thrown by the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne. Westwood also attended Yves Saint Laurent's show, enthusing afterwards about the expertise that a couturier like

Saint Laurent has at his fingertips. "He could do anything he wanted," she said, imagining perhaps, a more flamboyant, over-the-top collection. In an interview with *Le Figaro* in July, Dior's chairman, Bernard Arnault, said: "I want modern creativity in the spirit of Christian Dior himself." And it seems as though he is looking in the right direction. Other designers rumoured to have been approached include the hip downtown New York

American, Marc Jacobs, a favourite of the Croydon supermodel Kate Moss; Martin Margiela, the original avant-garde deconstructivist designer who has managed to remain a cult underground figure while building up a thriving business on sale in the world's leading department stores; Jean-Paul Gaultier, the whacky designer and TV presenter might not seem such an outlandish suggestion, considering his early days under the tutelage of

Pierre Cardin: Christian Lacroix, who heads up Paris's youngest couture house bearing his own name, has also been talked about. Two other young British designers who would certainly cause a stir were they to be appointed are Alexander McQueen and Hussein Chalayan. McQueen however, would not take the job. "There is only one Paris fashion job for me," he said. "Yves Saint Laurent."

Now that would be interesting. "I might have to do it for the sake of my other kids. They couldn't go without a dad and I don't think my husband will cope with the pressure of more kids. I think he'll leave and I don't want that."

Meanwhile the saga of Mandy Allwood, 37, continued yesterday with the entrance of her mother who declared that her son was a "shameless opportunist". Sybil Wheeler added: "I think the real reason he is so happy about the pregnancy is because he believes it will make him rich."

Third woman enters foetus fiasco

LIZ HUNT
and REBECCA FOWLER

The "cash for foetuses" fiasco hit a new low last night, when a woman who is 20 weeks pregnant with twins told a newspaper that she may abort one or both babies because her house was too small, and her marriage is threatened by their birth.

"Pro-life" groups, who last week raised thousands of pounds to halt what was thought to be the first selective termination of a twin in Britain, say they fear that some women are now being tempted to hold their unborn babies to ransom in the hope of cash handouts.

Nuala Scarisbrick, of the anti-abortion charity Life, said it would be investigated thoroughly to determine if it was a genuine case, worthy of help. "We have asked for 72 hours to look into this. We have a small sum of £10,000 available but we are aware of the possibility of people seeing us as some kind of golden egg."

The development follows the bitter controversy last week over a woman who had one of her twins selectively aborted because she could not cope with two. Scarcely had that furore died down when it was revealed that a 31-year-old woman, Mandy Allwood, who was carrying eight embryos, would continue with the pregnancy after she and her partner struck a deal for up to £1m with the *News of the World*.

The latest case, reported in the *Oxford Mail*, involves a woman who lives with her husband and two children in a three-bedroom house in Banbury. She said she and her husband talked about getting rid of one child, but now it might have to be both. "I don't want to get rid of either of them. He thinks it's not fair to keep one and not the other. If we had somewhere to put them it might be different, but we'd struggle so much I don't think my husband will cope with it all."

"I might have to do it for the sake of my other kids. They couldn't go without a dad and I don't think my husband will cope with the pressure of more kids. I think he'll leave and I don't want that."

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Health of the Nation: Dangerous appetites persist despite state-sponsored push to promote exercise and prevent disease

Fitness campaign fails to tip the scales

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

British men and women are getting fatter, women are drinking too much, and children are still taking up smoking. In spite of the Government's targets to make Britain a healthier nation.

The Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, was warned by the National Audit Office (NAO) that the NHS was failing to meet three key targets which it set four years ago for reducing obesity, drinking among women, and smoking by 11 to 15-year-olds.

The Health of the Nation targets are a central plank in the Government's campaign for a healthier country, and the findings of the NAO will come as an embarrassment for ministers.

The report said the Department of Health set a target of reducing obesity among men by 25 per cent by the year 2005, but the number of overweight men had more than doubled to 12 per cent.

Women, however, appear to be worse at fighting the flab. The NAO found that obesity had nearly doubled to more than 15 per cent of the female population, in spite of the NHS target of reducing the percentage of fat women by one third by 2005.

Perhaps more worrying for the Government is the continued rise in smoking among schoolchildren, in spite of its attempts to cut the trend, including bans on tobacco advertising near schools.

The Government set a target of reducing smoking among 11 to 15-year-olds by a third by 1994 after finding that 8 per cent of all children in that age group were smokers. But the NAO found that 8 per cent was probably the low point. It remained at 10 per cent before rising to 12 per cent. "This suggests that the actions taken or co-ordinated by the Department of Health to reduce smoking among children have not been successful," says the report.

Mr Dorrell yesterday rejected pressure to ban advertising of tobacco products. He denied such a ban would help to stop young people smoking, and insisted that higher prices were more likely to stop young people taking up the habit.

However, the Government has come under fire from the Liberal Democrat spokesman, Simon Hughes, for allowing one school to be sponsored by a tobacco company.

The report is likely to increase the pressure for more concerted action to reduce preventable illness. The NAO report on the Government's Health of the Nation targets, set in 1992, found that progress was being made in 11 areas, including strokes, breast cancer for 50 to 69-year-olds, suicide, lung cancer for men under 75, accidents, and gonorrhoea.

It was making some progress towards its targets in six other areas, including cigarette smoking among men and women, the consumption of saturated fats in food, and under-age pregnancies.

But there was too little information on the targets for blood pressure, cervical cancer, skin cancer and giving up smoking in pregnancy. There had been no change in lung cancer in women under 75, or in drinking among men. And there was insufficient useful data on mental illness leading to suicide, or on drug misusers sharing needles (a prevalent cause of Aids).

The NAO called on the Government to take further action where targets were not being met, and to improve the supply of data. But it did not offer any practical ideas on how Mr Dorrell can act to change people's lifestyles.

There are initiatives being planned to tackle obesity and teenage smoking, but as long as children regard smoking as fashionable, they are unlikely to take the warnings seriously. The anti-Aids campaign raised questions about the value of shock advertising on young people.

Virginia Bottomley, the former Secretary of State for Health, used to tell her officials "Nanny knows best". But another former health minister, Edwin Currie, was accused of adopting a lecturing tone when she advised people about their dietary habits. Mr Dorrell, a thin man who drinks little, and who does not smoke, may be the right role model for the targets, but he has no plans to act as the nation's nanny.



Cheers: Two women meet for a drink in a wine bar; the government campaign to reduce women's consumption of alcohol has had little effect. Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Private hospitals hit as fewer pay for cover

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The number of subscribers to private medical insurance dipped last year, with more private hospital beds closing than opening for the first time in a decade.

Despite the presence of conditions necessary for renewed growth in private health cover, 1995 remained essentially flat, figures published in *Laing's Review of Private Healthcare*, the annual "Bible" of the private health care industry, show.

And the National Health Service is continuing to take private patient business away from private hospitals, with NHS paybeds increasing their share of the market last year to an estimated 15.1 per cent, against a little over 11 per cent in 1988.

Some 6.5 million people, or around 11 per cent of the population, are covered for private medical treatment. But that

figure has remained unchanged for five years.

Despite the market remaining in the doldrums, premiums continued to rise faster than inflation, at 2 per cent above the retail price index, and look set to continue to do so for the rest of the decade, the review says.

After 10 years in which the number of private hospital beds grew by between 100 and 300 a year, the total fell last year for the first time in a decade, down by 471 as four private hospitals closed and only one opened. At the same time the number of dedicated NHS paybed units rose by three to 77. Between them, these account for the bulk of NHS private patient activity and rival in size the biggest private hospital groups, providing 1,400 beds against Bupa's 1,700, General Healthcare's 1,540 and Nuffield Hospitals' 1,450 beds.

The proportion of elective operations paid for privately has also fallen. This is partly due to

the Government's drive since 1991 to cut NHS waiting lists and waiting times, which has increased the number of elective operations performed by the NHS. While privately paid-for operations in both the NHS and private hospitals rose sharply, the increase in ordinary NHS activity has been even greater, so that privately funded surgery accounted for just under 13.5 per cent of all elective procedures in England and Wales in 1992/93, the last year for which full figures are available, against almost 15 per cent in 1986.

The improved efficiency of the NHS means that during the 1990s "the NHS has been challenging one of the key selling points of private medical insurance", the review says. It adds, however, that while this offers "a potential threat" to private cover, there is no reason to

suppose that the NHS will seriously undermine the demand for private medical insurance.

Further independent hospital closures are, however, likely as the big insurers develop "preferred provider" networks. These limit the hospitals which can be used by those covered by some of their schemes. Despite the flat market, renewed growth in private medical insurance cannot be long delayed. William Laing, the review's editor said, "Just like the housing market, the conditions for recovery have been in place for some time and look set to continue to be so as disposable income rises, as middle management 'downsizing' runs its course and as the economy generally continues to grow."

Laing's Review of Private Healthcare 1996 0171-254-1268, £130.

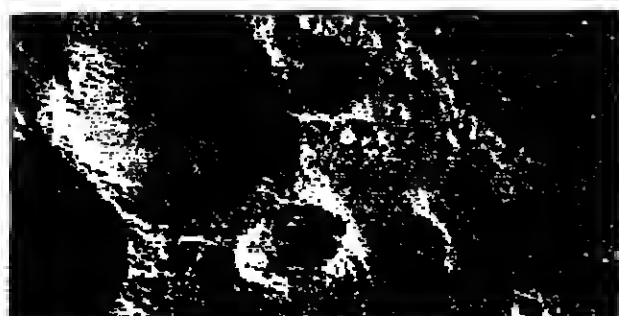
Mars craters that could hold the key to meteorite ALH84001

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Editor

A week after NASA's announcement that life could have existed on Mars, a scientist has searched 42,283 craters on the planet - and narrowed the source of the fossil-containing meteorite down to two of them.

Dr Nadine Barlow, who carried out the search electronically on a computer database of Mars craters, says that the results could be used to direct future space missions to the best planets to give them the best chance of finding fossil remains. "There are no plans to land spacecraft at these locations at present, but there is the possibility to focus on these areas," she said yesterday.

Both lie within a few hundred miles of each other in the eastern area of the heavily cratered southern highlands of Mars, where asteroids have repeatedly



The elliptical crater on the south-eastern edge of the bigger one is a possible source of the Mars meteorite

hit the planet during its life. Meteorites would be thrown into space from the surface by an asteroid's impact.

Dr Barlow, a physicist at the University of Florida, began checking possible sources almost immediately after last week's news from scientists at the United States space agency that meteorite ALH84001,

which is thought to show signs that early life developed 4.5 billion years ago, was thrown from the planet 16 million years ago and then drifted in space before landing in Antarctica about 13,000 years ago.

"16 million years may sound like a long time to humans, but for geologic processes it is a very short period, particularly for a

planet like Mars which has apparently experienced little geologic activity over the past billion years," she said.

She fed a set of search criteria into the computer which held a database of all the craters on Mars - a catalogue she had produced as a postgraduate in the Eighties. Then she told it to search for craters that were comparatively young, but in ancient terrain - since the rock itself was very old - and in sites where water had once been, as the rock contained carbonates.

A high-speed search cut the 42,283 candidates down to 23, which were in turn reduced to two by further refinement. "I'm fairly confident this is correct," Dr Barlow said yesterday. "I think that the criteria we used were conservative. But I have been working almost around the clock on this."

Dr Barlow hopes to publish her work later this year.

Windfall tax could fund new jobs

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Labour's windfall tax on the privatised utilities could be used to fund the creation of jobs in the regions to defuse the Tory attack on Labour's "tax bombshell".

Under the plans being prepared by Labour, some of the tax on the excess profits of the water companies could be offered back to them for job creation in the regional water industries.

Senior Labour sources said earmarking the receipts from the tax for jobs and training in the regions could win wider support from the business community and answer Conserva-

tive attacks on the raid on excessive profits by water and electricity companies.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, is committed to imposing the tax to pay for Labour's jobs and training programme. The tax would be paid to central government, but John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, is keen to see some of the money harnessed to finance the drive for growth in the regions.

The water and electricity companies would be expected to take part in some of the job creation schemes, which would be directed by regional development agencies.

Earlier this week, Labour

claimed that the privatised companies pushed through a £20m pay and perks package for their directors while becoming the worst group of persistent polluters in the country. The Labour survey, disclosed in the *Independent on Sunday*, showed that 12 executives in 10 large water companies received packages in pay, bonuses, pension contributions and share options worth more than half a million pounds each.

The companies have been fighting Labour's plans for a windfall tax, but Labour believes some will see the advantage of paying a tax which comes back to them either directly in job

creation schemes or indirectly through benefits to their regions.

Mr Prescott is behind ambitious plans to take Labour's draft election manifesto on the road in dozens of meetings around the country. The tour, which will be joined by the party leader, Tony Blair, will seek to win support for the broad thrust of New Labour policy before the party conference in October.

Mr Prescott said: "I have been preparing a big push for the 'Road to the Manifesto' campaign. Every constituency party is going to be involved, and trade unions. It is the biggest consultation exercise that has taken place."

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news

Go-ahead for all police to carry CS spray

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Police patrol officers throughout England and Wales are to be allowed to carry CS sprays after a six-month trial of the incapacitant which has been deemed a success.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is expected to announce the decision next week and officers from all 43 police forces are likely to be given the spray by the New Year. Hand-

held CS canisters were issued to 3,800 officers in 16 forces at the beginning of March. Police chiefs hoped they would help to stem the rise in the number of officers injured. The spray can reduce someone to a coughing, spluttering wreck within seconds.

The Home Office agreed to be guided by the police chiefs and has approved the use of the device after chief constables and police officers said they were impressed by it. A police source

said: "On the whole we are delighted with the results. The spray has been far more effective than we could have hoped."

Liberty, the civil rights group, attacked the decision, arguing that there were still severe problems with the training of officers in the use of CS and unanswered questions about side-effects.

The group said that about 20 people were taking action against the police for alleged abuse of the device.

In the first three months CS was sprayed on 366 occasions. It was drawn but not used a further 268 times. The deterrent or "threat" value of the spray was an unexpected bonus, the police said.

At least two people needed hospital treatment after being sprayed but the police said they have no reports of long-term medical harm. CS spray takes immediate effect and causes streaming eyes and nose, eyelid spasm, breathing difficulties,

and in some cases blistering of the skin.

The use of the incapacitant reduced the number of assaults during the first half of the trial by 6.8 per cent and time lost by 66 per cent. An unarmed control group, who were compared to the officers with CS, recorded a drop in attacks of 14 per cent and time lost was down by 43 per cent. The result, while confusing, may suggest the new weapons has most effect against the more serious and thus

time-consuming incidents.

The Association of Chief Police Officers self-defence sub-committee will meet to finalise plans in the next few days. A spokesman said: "Feedback from officers on the ground has been extremely positive."

A Home Office source added: "It's up to police what they want. If they are happy then so are we."

The Home Secretary gave the police permission to carry out trials of CS spray after reject-

ing experimentation with pepper sprays on the grounds of potential health dangers.

The trials are currently taking place in the Metropolitan Police, and the West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Kent, Leicestershire, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire forces.

Once they have been given the official go-ahead, officers

from other forces will be trained and issued with the French-made spray and it is expected to eventually become standard issue for all front-line officers. However chief constables in some rural forces are yet to be convinced that the sprays are necessary.

Trials were due to take place last year but were halted after a Metropolitan Police instructor suffered burns to his eyes and had to have them covered for five days.

Arts news: Shortage of room forces star to sell £500,000 worth of modern works □ Scots bid to reclaim Edinburgh festival

Mr Caine regrets he no longer has space for his Picasso

DAVID LISTER

The actor Michael Caine is selling works of art worth more than £500,000 because he cannot find room for them in his Oxfordshire mansion. The collection includes paintings by Picasso, Lowry and Salvador Dali.

Caine and his wife Shakira are selling their other home in Hollywood to spend more time in Britain. The art collection has decorated their American base for some years.

The collection, which will be auctioned by Sotheby's in London this autumn, is made up of dozens of art deco and art nouveau objects and a pen and ink drawing by Henry Moore in addition to the paintings. Once the couple had shipped the artwork back from the US, it became clear there was not enough room for it to fit alongside pieces the couple already own in Britain.

Caine said yesterday: "I had hoped we might be able to squeeze the two collections together, but there simply isn't the room. I shall be sorry to part with the things we had when we lived in Los Angeles, but I was concerned that the more fragile pieces could get damaged by being crammed in too tightly."

He bought most of the art work in a brief period of collecting in the late 1960s at a time when art nouveau and art deco was being rediscovered.

A Sotheby's spokesman said: "It is certainly rare for a famous person to sell a collection built

up over many years like Michael Caine has done. Part of the appeal of all these works, beyond their intrinsic merit, is the fact that they are fresh to the market after 25 years."

A pen and ink portrait by Picasso of his mistress Dora Maar, signed and dated 16 July, 1945, is estimated to sell for up to £15,000. A charcoal pen, ink and pencil drawing, entitled *Two Figures* by Henry Moore from 1943 could fetch up to £6,000. There are also paintings by Paul Nash, Charles Gimner and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska.

A signed water colour by Salvador Dali, *Trois Personnages Assis*, is estimated at between £4,000 and £6,000. The prints include Marc Chagall's *Les Amoureux sous l'Arbre*, expected to fetch up to £18,000.

Art nouveau and art deco pieces include works by Galle, Daum, Tiffany, Lalique, Mucha and Erté. The vases by Emile Galle are likely to fetch some of the biggest prices. One inscribed with a verse from Baudelaire could sell for up to £20,000, and a large elephant vase could fetch up to £35,000.

Phillipe Garner, head of 20th century decorative arts at Sotheby's, said: "When I started at Sotheby's, I knew Michael Caine was an enthusiastic collector who was acquiring good examples of art nouveau and art deco. I am delighted, a quarter of a century later, to be asked to sell this delightful collection which might hopefully introduce new collectors to the market."



No room at the mansion: Michael Caine showing off some of the objets to be auctioned at Sotheby's in the autumn. Top right: Henry Moore's charcoal drawing *Two Figures*, and (below) George de Feure's *Figure with a Dog*



Fringe venue aims to scotch the English

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Scottish performers, piqued by the domination of the Edinburgh festival by the English, have opened their own dedicated fringe venue, the first of its kind in the event's 50-year history.

The setting-up of the Famous Grouse House represents the start of a campaign by the Scots to reclaim their rights to the international arts festival, which takes place annually in their capital and attracts more than a million visitors from across the world.

From the beginning, Scottish performers believe, the festival has been effectively hijacked by the English. They dominate both the management side - the current director, Brian McMaster, is English as have been all but one of the previous directors - and the major fringe venues.

Nor is the problem confined to drama. On the music side as well, there is increasing anger about the exclusion of Scottish work. "In the entire official Edinburgh International Festival programme there is but one work by a Scot, James MacMillan's opera *Ines de Castro*," Hugh McBain of the Scottish Society of Composers said.

His view is echoed by Hugh Loughlan, a prize mover in the creation of Scottish International at the Famous Grouse House, and artistic director of Gallus Theatre, a touring company set up to encourage Scottish writing and performance. "Scottish culture has been so marginalised by the English

that setting up a Scottish venue here is a bit like dedicating a venue to performers from Lapland," he said.

"This is our capital city and our festival, yet the Scots have not been represented in the Fringe. This has been the situation for 50 years. If that happened in any other country - such as England - I don't think they would have been too happy."

Mr Loughlan's experience of reviewing Scottish shows for the *Edinburgh Evening News* for the past two years of the festival has made him sharply aware of the way that Scottish companies have been pushed aside by English ones - often because of financial constraints - and forced to perform in scattered, poor-quality venues.

"I happened to find a programme for the Edinburgh Festival in 1967 or 1968. It had one piece of Scottish theatre in it, by John McGrath," he added. "This year's festival has one piece of Scottish theatre in it - by John McGrath. That's how far we've moved on."

He and Raymond Ross, his fellow artistic director at Gallus, decided to take action. Thanks to sponsorship from the makers of The Famous Grouse whisky, they have rented a venue from Edinburgh University and scheduled a programme which includes drama, children's entertainment, community and youth work.

"The great thing is that it is not just for the Scottish performers," Mr Loughlan added. "It is for the Scottish audiences, too."



Suspense at the Grouse House: Melanie Stewart Dance Theatre's 'Cocktail in the Sky' Photograph: Jo Rennie

DAILY POEM

Waiting

By William Ernest Henley

*A square, squat room (a cellar on promotion),
Drab to the soul, drab to the very daylight;
Plasters array in unnatural-looking innards;
Scissors and lint and apothecary's jars.*

*Here, on a bench a skeleton would write from,
Angry and sore, I wait to be admitted:
Wait till my heart is lead upon my stomach,
While at their ease two dressers do their chores.*

*One has a probe - it feels to me like a crowbar.
A small boy sniffs and shudders after bluestone.
A poor old tramp explains his poor old ulcers.
Life is (I think) a blunder and a shame.*

WE Henley (1849-1903) suffered from boyhood from tubercular arthritis and had a foot amputated. In 1873, the year this poem was written, and in an attempt to save the other, he spent a year under the supervision of Lister in the Edinburgh Infirmary. Here, he met Robert Louis Stevenson and the two became great friends. Henley's 'Hospital Sketches' were published in 1875. Years later, a courageous and independent editor of a number of important Scottish literary magazines and reviews, he published the works of Yeats, Henry James, H G Wells, Hardy and Kipling.

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Robert Milliken crosses Australia's outback in the luxurious Ghan on a trip that once took two days and now takes 22 hours

Railway revival in a town like Alice

Its silver carriages gleaming in the outback sun, the Ghan stands at Alice Springs station waiting to take me on the overnight journey through the desert to Adelaide. A hot, dry wind blows down the tracks. The "winter" temperature is 28°C.

The contrast could not be greater with my last overnight train journey, from Moscow to St Petersburg in the snow. But certain similarities apply. Uniformed attendants wait outside each carriage to direct passengers to their berths (although they do not knock on my door just before bedtime asking me to pay money to use the sheets, as they had on the Russian train).

I am in the Algebruckina car, between the Oodnadatta and the Oasis cars, named after rivers and settlements along the 1,500km route south. My first-class berth is self-contained: a bed, a basin and a loo, all of which fold away to leave a comfortable seat. At 2pm, right on schedule, the train slides out of the station, through the red and ochre walls of the Mac-



RIDING THE IRON ROAD

Donnell Ranges, heading confidently into the Never Never. It was not always thus. Up to 16 years ago, buying a ticket on the Ghan and hoping to reach your destination on time was like taking a ticket in the lottery. The original tracks, built through shifting desert sands, frequently washed away in flash floods. Termites attacked the sleepers. The train was so slow that its unofficial theme song was "I'll Walk Beside You". The story is still told of a train that was stranded for two weeks by floods and of the engine driver who shot wild goats to feed his passengers.

Then in 1980, Australian National Railways, the government-owned rail company, decided that the Ghan should not be allowed to die. It built a new line, with concrete sleepers, across almost 1,000km of desert. It replaced the rickety rolling stock with luxurious, air-conditioned cars. A trip that once took anything from two days to two months now takes 22 hours, and the re-born Ghan is considered one of the great



Alice in wonderland: The Ghan represents the new face of Australian railways, luxurious, speedy and efficient

railway journeys of Australia, if not the world.

When the first Ghan steamed into Alice Springs on 6 August 1929, hauled by locomotive NM135 with its cow-catcher at the front, and cheered by welcoming locals, the scene was like something from Australia's version of the Wild West, Alice Springs, in Australia's "dead heart", was still as cut off from the rest of the country as it had been in 1872 when it was founded as the site for a telegraph station. For more than 50 years, camels and their Afghan drivers, first imported in the 1860s, had been central Australia's primary transportation link with the outside world.

The Ghan was named in their honour. The line's completion from Adelaide to Alice was part of a grand vision for a 3,000km north-south transcontinental railway linking southern Australia with Darwin, and thence the lucrative markets of Asia. The vision remains just that, and the line still stops at Alice.

Elsewhere, though, railways played a pivotal part in expanding Australia's frontiers. By the 1940s, at the height of rail's fortunes, the country's total track network, if laid end-to-end, would have stretched from London to Sydney and back. The trouble was that each of the six states had managed to build six different systems with different gauges.

With the arrival of the car and air travel it is easy to see why

government planners decided it was simpler to let railways fade away than to turn them into a truly national system. Shamefully, that almost happened.

Now governments have realised belatedly that it is more efficient to move freight by rail than road. In 1992, the federal government sank millions of dollars towards finally ironing out the colonial mess of a multi-gauge system. It also set up a new corporation with the aim of taking inter-city freight off roads and on to rail.

Last year it became possible for the first time for trains to run the 4,000km between the east and west coast capitals on the same international standard gauge rail. Passenger train revival is moving at a slower

pace. But the Ghan and another long-distance passenger train, the Indian Pacific, running between Sydney and Perth, are the inheritors of Australia's great railway era.

As darkness fell, and the Ghan ploughed on between the Simpson and Great Victoria deserts, I reflected on that era with a passenger at my table in the dining car, a young engineer from Northern Ireland. He told me that he was taking a month to see Australia by train with a rail pass that allowed him five separate trips.

It was good value. He had travelled from Sydney to Adelaide on the Indian Pacific, to Alice Springs and back on the Ghan, and was planning to travel to Cairns, in tropical

north Queensland, on another restored passenger train, the Queensland, a total of 13,000km for £600. The trains were giving him a true sense of Australia's immense distances and physical contrasts. "This is a nostalgia trip for me," he said. "There's nothing like this train left in Britain."

We repaired for drinks to the non-smoking lounge car (there is a separate lounge car for smokers). The carriage, decorated in Aboriginal motifs, filled up with what appeared to be retirees enjoying, as my Irish friend put it, "the fruits of their life's hard work". A woman played the piano and the others sang songs such as *Daisy, Daisy, Give Me Your Answer, Do*.

The train had been travelling for seven hours, almost in a straight line, without stopping. Although most of my fellow passengers appeared to be young or middle-aged tourists, the revived Ghan still performs the original train's function and stops, by request, at sidings in the middle of the night to take outback dwellers to town.

Urban Australians still remain wedded to cars and aircraft. But in the frazzled Nineties, there is a yearning for a return to more leisurely, civilised forms of travel. And, if the Ghan's performance is anything to go by, it should add strength to that process. When we pulled into Adelaide station next morning at 11.10, we were half an hour early. Original Ghan hands, eat your hearts out.

Urban Australians still remain wedded to cars and aircraft. But in the frazzled Nineties, there is a yearning for a return to more leisurely, civilised forms of travel. And, if the Ghan's performance is anything to go by, it should add strength to that process. When we pulled into Adelaide station next morning at 11.10, we were half an hour early. Original Ghan hands, eat your hearts out.



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Bear lovers discover nature of their beast

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

From high in the French Pyrenees comes news this week that a brown mountain bear attacked a flock of sheep near the small settlement of Prat-Bonrepaul and killed six lambs. So what, a phlegmatic French townsman would say, such things happen from time to time; that's how nature is.

Unfortunately, however, the bear was not just any bear. She was Mellba, one of two small brown bears recently introduced into the region in the hope of saving the endangered Pyrenean bear, and the slaughter of the lambs threatens to revive a controversy that has rumbled beneath the surface since the project was mooted.

In 1991 four districts in the central French Pyrenees joined forces to promote economic development through tourism. Their thoughts turned to bears, partly in the light of concern that a France-Spain road tunnel then being discussed could kill off the last of the Pyrenean bears. There were thought

to be only eight left.

In 1993, the French environment ministry agreed to support a bear-reintroduction project and Brussels agreed to provide 75 per cent of the funding. The task of finding and reintroducing the bears was entrusted to a French organisation called Artus and Slovenian bears were selected as being genetically the closest to the Pyrenean bears.

This spring a team of zoologists went to Slovenia to trap their first bear. Its transfer, from trap to special container to van, was avidly followed by French television viewers, as was the release of the animal - about six years old and now named Ziva - near Melles.

Three weeks later, a second, younger bear - Mellba - was released at a different spot. Both have electronic tags so that their every move can be monitored. A third bear, the first male, is due to join them in the coming weeks.

So far, however, what has been discovered has not been particularly satisfactory for anyone. Ziva set off for Spain, where she has since spent



Off to Spain: Ziva on her release

Photograph: Reuters

much of her time. Mellba, while remaining mostly in France, has combined elusiveness (which could make attracting the hoped-for wildlife tourists difficult) with a regrettable taste for lambs. She killed her first two weeks ago. Now, it is six in one night.

Certain precautions were taken at the outset to allay fears about the project, the main one being a generous compensation scheme for farmers that works out at about 1,400 francs (£180) per lamb, more than double the market price.

The loss of so many lambs so soon, however, has been an embarrassment for conservationists. The Artus group's local representative, Patrick Beauchet, said that it was important "not to dramatise the situation". "If the worst comes

to the worst, she might be withdrawn."

Local people are said to be putting a brave face on Mellba's indiscretions, hoping that the bears will eventually bring in the tourists - and extra income. They also feel nostalgic about the bears they lost in the Eighties. "The Pyrenees without bears would be like Africa without elephants," the mayor of Melles was quoted as saying. Another resident drew a comparison between bear-sighting possibilities and the likelihood of seeing the Virgin Mary at the nearby shrine of Lourdes. "People go to Lourdes without necessarily seeing the Virgin," she said gnomically.

On the Spanish side, farmers have reportedly threatened to use their guns the moment the bears cause any trouble.

Jakarta arrests more activists

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Jakarta

More than a fortnight after violent demonstrations in Jakarta, the Indonesian government appears to be intensifying its crackdown on political dissidents with the arrest and detention of 10 more pro-democracy activists.

Those arrested are members of the People's Democratic Party (PRD), a small left-wing group which is blamed by the government for fomenting the riots on 27 July.

Brigadier General Amir Syarifuddin, for the armed forces, confirmed yesterday that some of the new detainees would be charged with the capital crime of subversion. The PRD leader, Budiman

Sujahmiko, 27, was arrested near Jakarta on Sunday night with nine of his supporters. The authorities have not disclosed their whereabouts and, according to independent lawyers, at least two of the detainees have been denied legal representation.

As many as 200 people remain under arrest since the violence last month, although with independent organisations barred from prisons and hospitals exact numbers are impossible to determine. At least three people were killed and hundreds injured in the riots which began after police raided the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) and violently evicted the supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri, the deposed PDI leader. The armed forces

quickly blamed "communist insurgents" intent on overthrowing the 30-year-old government of President Suharto.

Human rights organisations and foreign governments, including the United States, Australia and the European Union, have expressed concern at the methods used in quelling the riots. Amnesty International last week said it "fears that accusations of a revival of communism will be used by authorities to justify further arrests of peaceful political activists and to crack down on the legitimate activities of peaceful pro-democracy, human rights and other groups in Indonesia. The Indonesian authorities are creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in which journalists, human rights activists

and others are afraid to publicise details of these and other human rights violations."

Ms Megawati was questioned last week about her links with the PRD, and has been summoned for another session tomorrow. The leader of the country's biggest unofficial trade union, Muchtar Pakpahan, has been held for a fortnight under the anti-subversion law which enables police to detain suspects for a year or more without trial.

On Monday, Pramodya Ananta Toer, one of Indonesia's most distinguished novelists and a lifelong thorn in the side of successive regimes, was also called in by police. The 70-year-old writer has spent a total of 17 years in Indonesian prisons, although he has never been charged with an offence.

A breathing space in Chechnya

The battles may be over – but will the ceasefire last?
Helen Womack reports

Moscow — Russian and Chechen commanders were reported to have agreed to a ceasefire yesterday, the first sign that the bloody battles over Grozny might be coming to a close — for now.

After eight days of fighting in the Chechen capital, Russian media said that a ceasefire would come into effect at noon today local time. But it was not clear whether the ceasefire was intended to be permanent or merely a temporary measure to allow the evacuation of civilians and wounded. If it holds, it will be a signal victory for Alexander Lebed, President Boris Yeltsin's security chief and envoy to Chechnya.

The news came after Russia's military commander in Chechnya, General Konstantin Pukhov, held talks with the rebel chief of staff, Aslan Maskhadov. The meeting began in the early evening in the village of Noye Atagi, 15 miles south of the regional capital. "The issue of a ceasefire and, possibly, the mechanism for a withdrawal of units and submission from the confrontation line are expected to be discussed," said the Interfax news agency before the meeting began.

The tentative peace process was set in motion by General Lebed, who on Sunday made a lightning visit to the war zone to meet Mr Maskhadov and returned to Moscow on Monday saying he was optimistic a ceasefire could soon be arranged. However, there was no reaction from the Kremlin yesterday to his criticism of the Russian government's policy in the Caucasus, and the demands he made for sweeping powers to manage the crisis himself.

In all probability, his sharp comments, made at a press conference, will have set off bitter infighting in the corridors of power. In particular, General Lebed will not have endeared himself to the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, a rival even before the general accused the commission Mr Chernomyrdin heads of failing miserably in its handling of Chechnya. A small change occurred in the Kremlin yesterday with the



Russian soldiers carry a dead comrade into a safe area of Grozny during fighting on Sunday with Chechen rebels. Photograph: Vassily Detskhov/AP

departure of President Yeltsin's press spokesman, Sergei Medvedev, a young journalist who, at his own request, was returning to the ORT state television channel where he used to work. Lately the television has seemed almost as restricted as in Soviet times although one anchorwoman, Arina Sharapova, has let it be known by small comments that the journalists are disgusted by the war in Chechnya. It was probably not accidental that, the other night, the news was followed by a popular Caucasian cartoon about a tiny ant outwitting a bullying elephant.

Certainly the Chechen rebels who infiltrated Grozny last

week with the express intention of spoiling President Yeltsin's inauguration celebrations, have run rings round the far larger and much better equipped Russian army.

Yesterday mortar shells were crashing over Grozny as the federal forces tried to retake key buildings in the city centre still held by the separatists.

Rebel information chief Movladi Udogov, who has been so skilled at presenting Chechnya's case that General Lebed himself praised him while saying the Russian spokesman should go and "fish and pick raspberries at their dachas", claimed yesterday that the separatists controlled 75 to 80 per

cent of Grozny. Eyewitnesses said rebels seemed to roam the streets at will while most of the Russian soldiers they saw were dead ones. The toll among servicemen is now officially 221 killed and 766 wounded.

Waves of refugees were trying to flee Grozny. The pro-Moscow Chechen government complained that Russian forces were firing on civilians and appealed to the army to open a corridor to let them out of the burning city. "Tens of thousands of people are trapped... without food supplies and with a catastrophic lack of medicine," it said. The army apparently dislikes the idea of a corridor because it fears rebels could

escape by melting into the crowd of refugees.

The Russian migration service said it had received 10 billion roubles (£1.3m) to cope with the new homeless. The European Commission in Brussels approved a new aid package for Chechnya, bringing the total assistance since the outbreak of war 20 months ago to nearly £29m. More than 30,000 people have died in the fighting and survivors are desperate for food and medical aid.

■ Moscow (AP) — A correspondent for Russia's largest television station was killed as he and his family tried to leave the Chechen capital during the rebel siege last weekend.

Ramzan Khadzhiyev, who covered the North Caucasus for the television station ORT, was shot in the head twice as he was driving out of Grozny with his wife and four-year-old son. Independent NTV television aired a brief interview with a passenger in the car who said it was Russian forces who opened fire on the vehicle.

The pro-government ORT suggested the rebels were behind the slaying, and Khadzhiyev, an ethnic Chechen, had received many threats from the rebels, who accused him of a pro-Moscow bias in his reporting and of betraying his people. He was the 19th journalist to die in the 20-month-old conflict.

Old and infirm left to suffer daily ordeal of bombardment

The people living in Chernorechye had no knowledge of any ceasefire yesterday. They came under mortar attack this morning as planes circled overhead, stretching their nerves to the limit.

This district on the south-west edge of Grozny showed the signs of heavy bombardment from the last week of fighting.

Smashed tree trunks lay in deserted streets pockmarked with mortar craters. People hung around outside their apartment buildings, not venturing far into the courtyard in case another mortar whistled in.

It was noon when the latest attack began. The night had been quiet, residents said, although they still all slept in their cellars. "We heard that Moscow announced an end to air strikes but the planes bombed again yesterday and today, just look what happened," said one Russian woman pointing at the crater and shrapnel marks gouged in the side of the building. "It was a deception. They deceive us every time," she added. This time, only one man was

Civilians are still awaiting relief from war, reports **Carlotta Gall** in Grozny

slightly wounded, but in the next courtyard where a second mortar fell, an old woman was killed outright and a one-year-old baby, hit in the head by shrapnel, had been taken to the hospital, residents said.

The elderly victim lay in the cellar under white sheets as neighbours gathered to dig another grave. The garden of an abandoned psychiatric hospital was being turned into a cemetery for the dozens who had been killed, one woman said.

"We buried five people in a single grave," said Khesir Dzhabkayev, a telephone engineer. He just escaped injury this time, bolting into the cellar where his family of four children and his mother were sheltering.

Some 20 to 30 people were in the bunker, a dark warren of nooks and crannies. People ducked under water pipes, lighting their way with matches. Mr Dzhabkayev's paralysed moth-

er lay on the earthen floor on a mattress in a tiny pantry.

"This is the third time we have had to live down here. It is an absolute nightmare," he said, shaking from the strain. "This is not even safe — how do I know it will not be hit with a penetration bomb?"

The fear is real. Less than a block away a penetration bomb had torn through every floor of an apartment building, blasting right down into the cellar.

The only people left in Chernorechye are, as in the early days of the war, the old, the infirm and many Russians who, unlike the Chechens, have no family network to help them.

Chechen refugees were still pouring out of this district, driving along the tram lines, crossing two dangerously precarious bridges over the Sumzha River, half patched up since they were destroyed in the first battle.

Families with small children

and old women scrambled down a muddy bank as the men frantically pushed cars along the rails. Mortars had landed in the field beside them minutes before. A grandmother collapsed, her family in tears.

The sound of heavy artillery explosions rolled across from the centre of the city every five or 10 minutes — less intensive than in recent days, but still more or less constant.

A silent procession followed: a young man carrying a wounded, retarded boy and a group bearing a woman on a mattress, who was unconscious, her face marked by shrapnel.

Behind them the sky was black from four fires burning in the western district where Grozny's oil refinery appears completely destroyed.

The Chechen fighters meanwhile, who have the run of the district, said they would demand by Russia before easing up their stronghold on Russian positions. "The war will not end until their troops leave," said Aslan, 21, as he walked back from fighting in the centre.

Bosnia set for imperfect poll

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Bosnian elections in a month's time will fall far short of Western democratic standards. United States officials said yesterday, as the Secretary of State Warren Christopher conferred with Nato civilian and military leaders in Brussels.

But the Nato Secretary-General, Javier Solana, stressed how much had been achieved in the past eight months, since the Nato-led peace implementation force (I-For) moved into the war-torn country.

A State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said: "These are not going to be pristine conditions for these elections. This is not going to look like a town in Germany or France... on election day. We're not going to create these conditions in the next 31 days."

ground forces in Bosnia. Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, helped defuse a confrontation with the Bosnian Serbs who had refused to allow Nato troops to inspect part of a heavy weapons storage site as they were entitled to do under the Dayton peace agreement.

Dr Solana and General George Joulwan, Nato's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, had visited the Bosnian Serb capital of Pale on Monday afternoon to secure formal agreement that the site could be inspected. But, as so often happens in Bosnia, it took time for the agreement to filter down to the commanders on the ground, and a Nato source in Sarajevo said it "came as a surprise" to many Serb leaders.

Early yesterday morning General Walker took the new Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, in a helicopter to the arms site at Han Pijesak, 30 miles east of Sarajevo, where the

Bosnian Serbs had refused to allow Nato inspection teams access on Monday. Nato officials said the move was, in part, to test the influence of Dr Plavsic, who replaced the indicted war-crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic as President. General Walker returned to Sarajevo late yesterday morning, after completing the inspection.

Mr Christopher met Dr Solana and General Joulwan in Brussels, to discuss the support I-For might provide for the forthcoming elections which aim to create common institutions for the whole of Bosnia, above the two "entities" — the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska. Although the Dayton peace agreement aims to maintain a unified, multi-ethnic Bosnia, in reality Bosnia is now firmly partitioned. The three factions have consistently tried to deter Bosnia's hundreds of thousands of refugees from voting in their

places of origin, as Dayton allows them to.

Mr Burns said Mr Christopher would discuss this with the Presidents of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia in Geneva today, along with the harassment of the media and the failure of local authorities in Bosnia and the governments of neighbouring states to hand over indicted war criminals for trial in the Hague.

Having completed the hand-over of large areas under the Dayton agreement and separated the armed forces of the former protagonists, I-For's 50,000 troops are now primarily concerned with creating the best possible conditions for the elections. This includes opening up roads and "creating the environment" in urban areas.

Some 2,000 monitors from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other international organisations are expected to oversee the elections.

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There's a great deal going on

international

Powell rallies the troops against Clinton

RUPERT CORNWELL
San Diego

Their image of moderation and compassion burnished by a bravura performance from reluctant megastar Colin Powell, the Republicans last night turned their fire on President Bill Clinton, all the while straining to play down the reputation for intolerance that has cost them so dear in recent months.

Halfway through its nominating convention the party has, by common consent, largely succeeded in its key objective of banishing memories of the 1992 gathering in Houston, whose harsh and divisive tone contributed to the downfall of George Bush. San Diego, by contrast, has been sweetness and light, epitomised by General Powell on Monday evening.

Winding up an emotional pageant of ex-presidents and a fearful tribute to Nancy Reagan to her husband, incapacitated by Alzheimer's disease, Gen Powell insisted the Republicans were the pro-growth party, dedicated to a strong, upright and prosperous America. "But let us never step back from compassion," he declared, "we must be firm, but we must also be fair."

Nor did he flinch from airing his differences with the stridently conservative party platform on abortion and job quotas. "You all know that I believe in a woman's right to choose and I strongly support

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

affirmative action," he insisted to a mixture of cheers and boos. But, he added to thunderous applause, the party was "big enough to disagree on individual issues," while working



Bush: "Broken-hearted" about "demeaned" White House

together to propel Bob Dole to the White House.

That was exactly what the conference organisers wanted from the four-star general and former Joint Chiefs chairman, whose precise role at the convention had been in some doubt after his refusal to enter a 1996 presidential race many thought he could win. So too was his enthusiastic endorsement of Mr

Dole who will be formally anointed by tonight's traditional roll-call vote of the states, and his veiled criticism of Mr Clinton's leadership.

Also banished thus far - insofar as possible - are the harder edges of the Republican Revolution of 1994, symbolised by the House Speaker, Newt Gingrich, now the least popular national politician in America. Though he is permanent chairman of the convention and was a speaker last night, Mr Gingrich has scarcely been in evidence here.

Nor has Ralph Reed, director of the Christian Coalition and leading spokesman for the religious right, which played a key role in the Republican recapture of Congress two years ago. Meanwhile, Pat Buchanan, right-wing scourge of Mr Dole during the primaries and the dark prince of Houston 1992, has fulfilled his appointed role of being seen but not heard.

After his written endorsement of the Dole/Kemp ticket on Monday, Mr Buchanan emerged on the convention floor to listen to Gen Powell, but saying nothing that would rock the Dole boat as the candidate struggles to erase Mr Clinton's commanding lead in the polls.

Instead, just as the organisers intended, the 12,000-strong media contingent in San Diego has been denied a whiff of real controversy. Instead, the country has been presented with a



Megastar: Gen Powell at the San Diego convention, rallying the Republicans and also attempting to play down their reputation for intolerance

brisk and seamless production stressing party unity, tailored not for the 2,000 predominantly conservative delegates in the ball but the millions watching proceedings at home. "Better dull than divisive," the *New York Times* wrote of the guiding strategy of the convention.

Even the abuse expected to be heaped on President Clinton last night, on topics from his al-

leged character defects to issues like health care, crime and the economy, was unlikely to change that judgement. The coveted job of delivering the keynote speech that would cap the night has been entrusted to the 38-year-old New York Congresswoman Susan Molinari, a self-described "party bloode" who symbolises the moderate suburban woman who has been

abandoning the party in droves because of its harsh line on abortion and other social issues.

Ms Molinari, mother of a three-month-old daughter, is one of the party's brightest rising stars. She is everything Mr Dole is not - naturally telegenic, constantly smiling, in touch with youth culture, even a confessed "experimenter" with marijuana. Though pro-choice,

she was expected to skirt the abortion issue, focusing on taxes and the economy.

Earlier on Monday, two ex-presidents delivered harsh criticism of Mr Clinton. Gerald Ford recalled his self-deprecating line upon being thrown into the presidency in 1974, that he was "a Ford, not a Lincoln" but described the current incumbent as "a convertible Dodge".

Theo Mr Bush spoke of his "heartbreak" at how the White House had been "demeaned" since he left office, and paid glowing tribute to his wife, Barbara, "the most popular woman in the USA" - a pointed reference to Hillary Clinton, decidedly unpopular and at the centre of endless Whitewater-related controversy.

Republicans still in Reagan thrall as Nancy steals the show

RUPERT CORNWELL

She was dressed in white. She looked as icy coquettish as when she ruled the White House, but this time emanated nothing but dignity and tragedy. She spoke for a bare three minutes or so, yet she managed to steal the show from Colin Powell. Such was the feat of Nancy Reagan on Monday

evening. Such, more appositely, is the enduring hold of her husband on the collective imagination of the Republican party.

Ronald Reagan, of course, couldn't be there - prevented by Alzheimer's disease from attending even his own 85th birthday party last February. Mrs Reagan gave no details of his condition other than to speak of the "terrible pain and loneliness" of "this very long goodbye" caused by the illness which destroys memory. But, in the institutional memory of the Republican party he will never die. There will be no goodbye.

First, the 2,000 delegates sat in adoring silence and savoured a short video that preceded Mrs Reagan's appearance. Two giant screens behind the podium recalled the triumphs of the

Reagan years, from the surge in the economy to the terminal decline of Communism. Skillfully it grafted on to that sun-dappled mythical America of the 1980s, the more chastened Republicanism of the mid 1990s. Henry Kissinger and Lee Iacocca were hailed from the party's Valhalla to sing his praises - but there too was Jack Kemp, present at the creation of Reagan-

omics, and now Bob Dole's vice-presidential nominee.

No matter that Kemp has his differences with Dole - a taciturn antithesis of Reagan who is driven by doubts not certainty, and who couldn't act if his life depended on it - nor that Reagan's legacy of massive deficits and growing disparity between rich and poor has had its detractors, even in Republican

ranks. Far more important, Kemp is Reaganism's modern embodiment: supply-sider, tax-cutter, and first last and foremost, an incurable optimist.

Then came Nancy, and even the ardent political foes were unanimously wiping their eyes. To utter silence, she called how "just four years ago, Ronnie stood before you and spoke at what he said might be

his last Republican convention". Her voice broke and her face brimmed with tears. "Sadly his words were too prophetic." But even now, his spirit was very strong, as was "his over-riding belief in the strength and goodness of America".

Like the 1960s actress she is, Mrs Reagan knows when other's words are better than her own, and she quoted from

his 1992 valedictory address in Houston: "Whatever else history may say about me when I'm gone, I hope I will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not your worst fears, to your confidence, rather than your doubts." He did. And because he made them feel better about themselves, they loved him. Last night proved they still do.

Reagan legacy, Section Two

Reform Party tied to the Perot name

TIM CORNWELL
San Diego

If the Reform Party is ever to walk on its own legs, says an aide to former Governor Dick Lamm, "it can't be carried around by Ross Perot".

But this coming Sunday, it is widely assumed, the party's supporters will do the obvious thing and elect Mr Perot as their presidential candidate. Mr Lamm, a three-term Democrat Governor of Colorado, and now a university professor, stood for the Reform nomination six weeks ago. As votes were counted this week, he was campaigning from his home in the state the only way he can afford, via back-to-back appearances on radio talk shows.

A Lamm spokesman, Eric Anderson, painted a picture of the Reform Party as a young political movement suffering from growing pains and "a certain amount of chaos". It appeals to a huge group of middle-class Americans who are alienated by the two-party system, aides claim. But for all its claims to be an independent third force, the party is tied financially and spiritually to the Perot name. Top functionaries are not only

veterans of the Perot effort in 1992 but, in many cases, are long-time personal aides. The bill for the Reform Party's gathering in Long Beach last weekend, a second meeting set for Pennsylvania on Sunday, and the price of sending ballots to more than 1 million people has run to more than \$6m (\$4m) - paid for by Mr Perot's office in Dallas. Mr Lamm has accused him of treating the Reform Party as a "wholly owned subsidiary". It is tough, he has said, running against a billionaire who "makes up the rules... as he goes along".

The California Reform Party, at least, has achieved some independence in a state where Mr Perot's support is relatively strong. Its 27-year-old chairman, Michael Farris, an oceanographic researcher in Los Angeles, said the local party had raised \$150,000 in donations, enough to finance three regional offices, and takes no money from Dallas. But it also, he said, had a "very, very good working relationship" with the local Perot Reform Committee, a separate group funded by Mr Perot.

Mr Perot's drive to launch a third party in the US has put the Reform ticket on the November

ballot in 34 of the 50 states so far. But the Perot camp has not released any verifiable membership numbers. The voting forms this week were sent to people who had signed the petitions required by law to get the party on the ballot. They are not paying members, and in an earlier survey only about 5 per cent - 50,000 people - bothered to reply. Two-thirds indicated a preference for Mr Perot.

Mr Lamm has made a professional play for the Reform nomination. His demand for barriers to new immigration, on the basis that 83 per cent of Americans are opposed to it, plays well with Perotistas who analysts say are increasingly young, blue collar, and discontented, and it drew loud cheers in Long Beach. But his name is virtually unknown across the country. Based on his 18.9 per cent share of the vote in 1992, if Mr Perot runs he will have access to up to \$30m in public money, an alarming prospect for Republicans. It is unclear whether Mr Lamm, if he won, would have any legal claim to the cash. To underwrite his shoe-string campaign, he has already taken out a \$30,000 mortgage on his home.

Patriot game played to win

The faithful at the Republican National Convention wear their patriotism on their sleeves - and on their heads, chests, and legs. See the Uncle Sam hats sprouting trunks and floppy ears, in honour of the Grand Old Party's elephant mascot. Marvel at the sequined waistcoats in red, white and blue. Gaze in wonder at the Stars and Stripes ties and trousers.

You would think you'd stumbled into a giant fancy dress party. But no one is laughing. They mean it. They really love their country. No one more than Mary Eckert of Columbus, Ohio, who beat off 100 other candidates for the honour of leading the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance at the convention's opening ceremony on Monday. Draped in the national colours, she wore a billowing flag for a skirt. "I was steeped in patriotism when I was

San Diego Diary

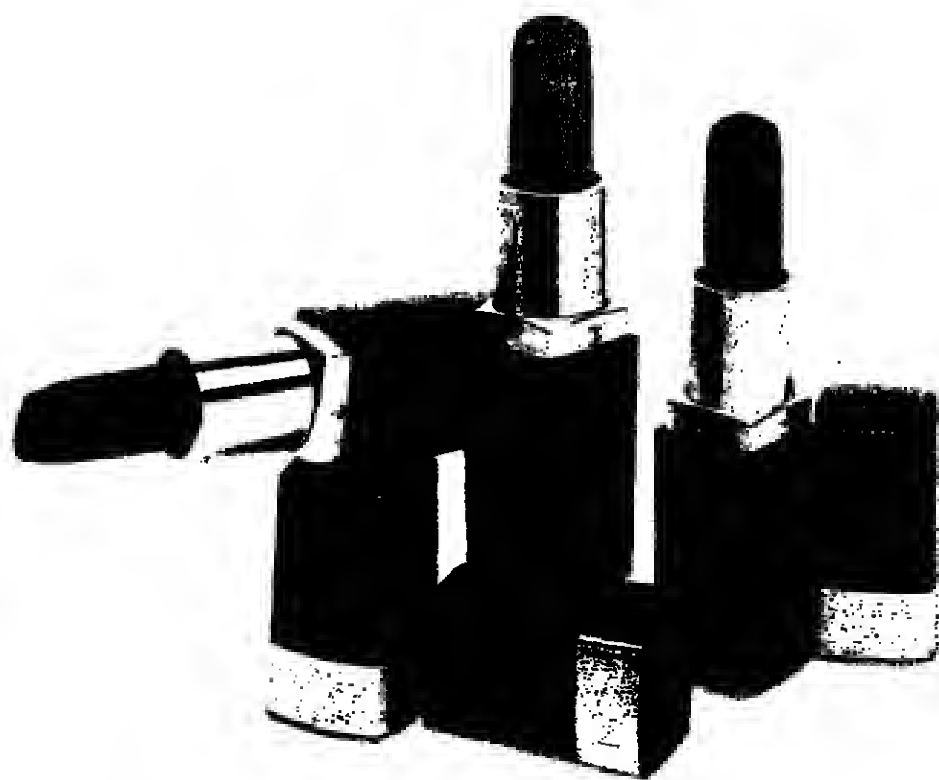
growing up," says Ms Eckert. "My family taught me never to put anything on top of the Bible and never to let the flag touch the ground." Are you listening, Michael Portillo?

Ralph Reed, the director of the Christian Coalition, has been making his presence felt. It was his people who cowed Bob Dole into changing the wording of an official convention document which initially advocated tolerance towards the pro-choice Powell camp. It was they who led the witch-hunt against the pro-choice governors of California, Massachusetts and New York, successfully removing them from the roster of convention speakers.

Why is Mr Reed so powerful? Because his militants are the best fund-raisers and election campaigners the Republicans have. So they have to give him what he wants. But Mr Reed is an honourable man, so he went before the television cameras and quite properly declared that the party was united and that Mr Dole's tax cuts would be great and that there was so much electricity on the convention floor "you could power the West Coast for a week". So this meant, a reporter asked, that he was endorsing the Dole-Kemp ticket, right? "Oh no," he said, shocked. "The Christian Coalition is an issues organisation. We are going to be distributing non-partisan election guidelines but, no, we will not endorse Bob Dole."

John Carlin

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See page 10 to register

Christie faces his last big challenge

Wales promote Williams to the senior side

Martyn Williams has been rewarded for his impressive Students' World Cup with promotion to the senior Wales side for their match against the Barbarians at the National Stadium, Cardiff, on 24 August.

The 20-year-old Pontypridd flanker is the only newcomer to a team showing three changes from the side which were overwhelmed 42-3 in the second Test against Australia in June. "Martyn has great potential and creative ability, the nose and hunger of a typical open-side flanker," Kevin

WARD

S G Law c Julian o Benjamin

P J Pritchett b Julian

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

"He was born in England, he has English parents and English grandparents," Larder said. "He is as English as I am."

Tollett, in his unmistakably Sydney accent, said that playing for the land of his birth - 23 years ago in *Hastings* - had been his ambition when he came to England. His form during the Broncos' surge towards a top four

Hockey

BILL COLWILL
reports from Vught, Netherlands

Injured Taylor out

Cricket

Australia forfeited its World Cup opener in Colombo in February after a suicide bombing killed 91 people and injured 1,400 in the capital's main financial district. Two weeks ago, another 70 people died in a commuter train bombing on the outskirts of Colombo.

aylor out

NatWest Trophy


NatWest Trophy

Batting					
Qualifications: Six innings					
	B	R	NO	Runs	
S Ganguly (India).....	9	14	6	762	1
G P Thorne (Surrey).....	12	22	4	1361	1
M H Gibbs (S Africa 'A') 7	12	1	1	839	1
S Lee (Somerset).....	11	16	4	915	1
S Hameed (Somerset).....	7	13	1	921	1

Batting

T-CLASS AVERAGE			Bowling
			Qualification: 20 wickets
100	50	Ave	
3	4	95.25	C E Ambrose (Wests)
6	5	76.72	C A Walsh (Glouce)
3	5	75.27	M A Ekanam (Herts)
3	5	75.25	Wasimq Ahmed (Pak)

Overs	M	Runs	W	5w	10w	Best	Ave
167.3	40	445	28	4	1	6-55	35.89
350.0	38	945	54	5	1	6-28	17.30
283.3	52	701	36	2	1	8-36	19.47
332.0	61	614	30	4	1	7-91	20.48


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*Singles only, nights only, 9am, 11am, 12am, 12.30am

Hidden Personality
At least, he has done since he was 10, when he left the Caribbean to join his family in the capital, where his father was setting up his own ministry.

What do you do with a drunken sailor?

BEING THERE

At Cowes Week, it seems there's really no choice but to join them.
Andy Martin drinks it all in

I had been in Cowes for barely five minutes, and I hadn't even set sail yet, and I was already sick as a dog. And yet I had cast off from Southampton as swashbucklingly as Errol Flynn. I would have given long odds against a shipboard romance flourishing between the mainland and the Isle of Wight. But the British Rail hydrofoil the *Red Jet* was advertised as a "high-speed service", and it all happened on fast forward. Her name was Lucy.

Even as I strode down the gangplank, I couldn't help noticing she held a copy of Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* in one hand. "I'm reading it for the second time round," she confided, as I took the seat next to her on the starboard side. "Have you read his essay on *The Art of the Novel*?" I countered, "or the early *Laughable Loves*?"

Lucy was a sailor. She had been drafted in at a late stage after her ship had lost a man overboard (they were sponsored by Bombay Sapphire gin and had been taking their responsibilities a little too seriously). She even taught sailing. I revealed that my knowledge of life on the ocean wave was limited to surfing and the occasional Sea Link ferry. So she kindly offered me Lesson 1: "Never hang on to the main-sheet. You'll capsize." I never made it to Lesson 2.

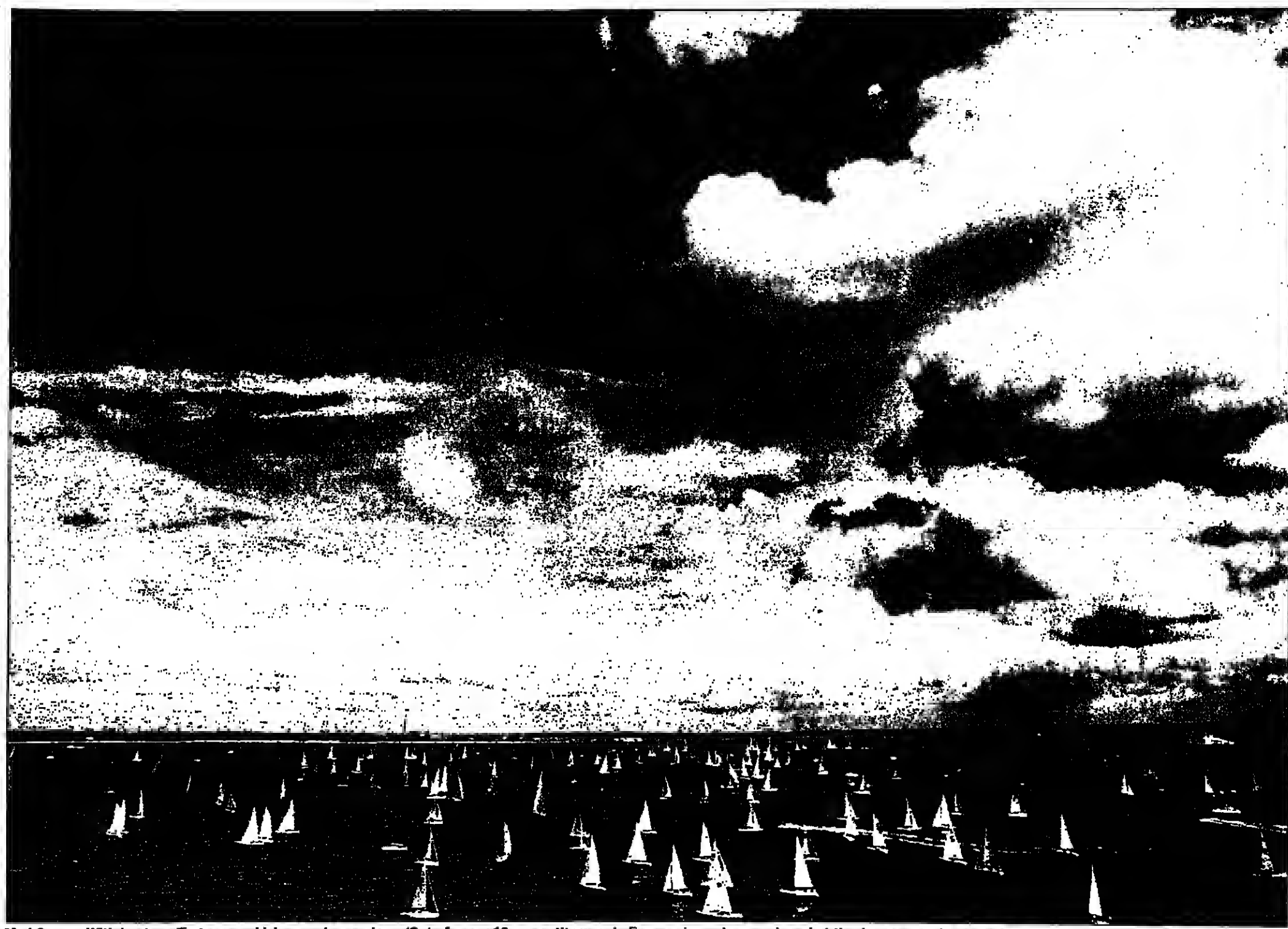
Lesson 2.
As we disembarked at West Cowes, she was shanghaied by a smooth-tanned, weather-beaten kind of cove called Justin. He was Justin and I was just out. Had a passing octopus wrapped a tentacle about Justin's neck at that precise moment, I doubt whether I would have stirred myself to look it off. But the trouble with sea monsters is they're never there when you need them. Come to think of it, Justin was a hit of an octopus himself, the way he was wrapping himself around Lucy. I was sunk, going down with all hands on board. But it turned out to be my lucky day after all.

Over at the Yacht Haven, I hove to at the Gents. As I dumped my gear beside one of the washstands, I couldn't help noticing in the mirror a thin, weedy stubbly customer standing at the long collectible urinal hut looking over his shoulder at me. He kept on looking. I messed around at the sink for a while. He was still there. It seemed like a long time to be standing about with your fly open. But, hey, free country, I said to myself, working up the courage to wander over to the trough. All the same, just to be on the safe side, I parked myself up the

"Hallo," he said. It wasn't actually "Hello sailor", but it was close.

"What's your name?"

I've always wanted to write, "I made my excuses and left". I've imagined other circumstances that would justify that immortal line, but this was my best chance. Only I left in so much of a hurry I forgot the ex-



Mad Cowes: With boats sailing every which way, chaos rules – ‘Out of every 10 competitors, only five maximum have a clue what they’re supposed to be doing’

Photograph: Robert Hallam

cuses bit, intent as I was on zipping at the time.

Cowes was as perilous a harbour as ever I've come across, what with steering between the Scylla of getting sand kicked in your eye and the Charybdis of an unsolicited close encounter. Thus it was that

You would think these ceaseless revellers had all just returned from a round-the-world trip on a teetotal yacht

I made full steam ahead to the Skandia Life hospitality marquee for a lifesaver. Hope came on the end of a cocktail stick when someone told me that the party to be seen at was the Oceanworld Crew Ball at Northwood House. Lucy had spoken of attending a "ball" that night. How many balls could there be in Cowes on any one night? I would be there, she would be there - maybe Justin wouldn't be there.

Paul Bertie of Oceanworld kindly let me in. He promised me a five-man-high pyramid on the dance floor by the end of the night, but the most I saw was a girl horsing around on someone's shoulders, and my hopes were similarly deflated. Justin wasn't there, but neither was Lucy. Or maybe they both were, carousing unremarked among the hundreds of sailors kitted out in floppy green and yellow Viking suits. The event was billed as the "unrefined crew ball", and the only refined thing about it was the alcohol (Mount Gay gin was the co-sponsor this time).

One T-shirt (one of the many, out-numbering blazers by about a thousand to one) summarized the mood of the evening: "Revel Without A Pause". You'd think, from the sight of the immense pitchers of beer, these ceaseless revellers had all just returned from a round-the-world trip on a teetotal yacht. Towards the end of the evening, by the time bodies began to be manhandled out and flung down on the lawn - and the ones that were left upright were staggering and slobbering - another T-shirt headline began to seem more appropriate: "Mad Cowes Disease".

The next morning down at the Yacht

Haven, I heard it said that the course at Cowes was not clearly marked out. Nonsense. No one I met had any difficulty navigating their way from ball to bar to beer tent. Somewhat overshadowed by her neighbours - Glenfiddieh, Teachers, Young's - the woman at the Nicorette tent said what sailors really needed was a patch over their arm to stop them drinking. I suspect a breathalyser would have put paid to the hopes of many. Mystified as to why it is sailors should drink so much, I did some research at the beer tent.

But when the hard, Wendy reckoned that the beer 'cent at the Yacht Haven saw more business in a week than the whole of Cowes during the rest of the year. Her theory was that the salt dries you out so you have to replenish your liquid stores regularly. Jennie, who shrewdly pointed out these old salts didn't replenish their Tropicana or their Britvic stores too frequently, maintained that the sailing was just an excuse for the drinking. Wendy thought it was a little bit of both, but she was sailing away the scurvy or the beriberi. And maybe seasickness, too. It seemed logical: the sea is rocking and rolling all round you so you have all this liquid sloshing about inside you to maintain the equilibrium. And

then after wobbling around at sea, you naturally would want to drink yourself into a stupor once you hit land so you could wobble up the street, too.

I finally put to sea on the press boat, and soon I was all at sea. I wasn't the only one, though. With hundreds of boats sailing every

Jennie said the sailing was just an excuse for the drinking. Wendy thought it was something to do with keeping away the scurvy

which way, it looked like chaos. "It is chaos," one Captain Haddock-type admitted. "Out of every 10 competitors, only five maximum have a clue what they're supposed to be doing." After a few collisions and bundles of near-misses in the high winds, the organizers wisely removed the firework barge from in front of the Royal Yacht Squadron and towed it off to East Cowes, out of harm's way, until the official start time. The

large was big and stationary but not so big and stationary that one of the more recreational of the sailors couldn't smash into it and set a premature spark to the blue touch paper.

There's no question that sailing can be pretty rugged. I wondered out loud why the Army and the RAF had yachts down at Cowes and why all these guys weren't in the Navy instead, thereby saving the taxpayer a packet. But one suave and muscular hombre assured me that it was all good training. "You can go out in tanks, but you're just pretending. But spend three consecutive days in a Force 9 swell on a J24 in the Channel—as we did a few months ago—and let's say the

Thus spoke Justin. For it was he, I had finally run into Lucy in the Haven. She had spent the night bunked in Justin's boat. It was all part of the training – good for teamwork. I began to understand why Dr Johnson said that any man who has not been a soldier or put to sea feels a sense of regret. And I think I now know the answer to the mystery of why sailors go about under this moral imperative to get tanked up. They drink to forget the unbearable lightness of being.

Invasion of the slugfest makes baseball tedious

Never did I think that a recent and unabashed convert to the game of baseball would utter the words. But here goes. I am bored with home runs. And not merely bored. Pound-
ed by them. Knocked dizzy and brainless by them, to the point of dreaming of an old-fashioned pitchers' duel, one of those virtually ex-
tinct 1-0 or 2-1 games where a lucky single can make the difference be-
tween triumph and despair. This year a plague of homers has descended on the land, baseball scores read like football games, and in my humble opinion America's national pastime is the poorer for it.

Logically, it should not be so. After all, the home run is one of the great thrills of all sport — a prodigy of arm and eye that enables a hitter armed with a bat less than three inches wide at its broadest point and just 0.45cc at his disposal to pick up a cricket-sized ball travelling at him at 80 or 90mph and rocket it back in the opposite direction, into the stands 350ft away. The spectacle is breathtaking.

If you can't get to the ballpark, radio, not television, is the way to fol-

low a game, and the homer is heaven for the commentators, or play-by-play announcers as they call them here. The words, wafting half-heard from a radio somewhere on a warm July evening, are among America's indelible summer sounds: "A long drive... deep to centerfield... back, back, real deep... *way it goodbye, this one is go-o-o-oo!*" Surely you can't get enough of it, can you? This year you can.

The precise reasons for the power explosion are a matter of argument among baseball sages, and more of that in a moment. But the figures speak for themselves. The eternal struggle between batter and pitcher has fluctuated over the years. But the hitting surge of the mid-1990s is without precedent. Two-thirds the way through the regular season, baseball is on a pace to produce over 5,100 homers, way above the previous record of 4,438 in 1987. True, the nippers will point out, only 26 teams were in the major leagues then, compared with 28 today. But in 1993, the only full post-expansion season played, the 28 teams managed only 4,050 homers. This year's sluggers are

SPORT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Rupert Cornwell, in Washington, yearns for the pitching duels of summers past

25 per cent more prolific, and some of the sport's most sacred records may fall.

With his 61 homers in 1961, Roger Maris expunged the single season record of his New York Yankee forerunner Babe Ruth from the record book. Now Maris is in danger of becoming history. Half a dozen players are threatening his mark, among them Mark McGwire of the Oakland A's, Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs, Mo Vaughn of their Boston Red Sox and Albert Belle of the

Cleveland Indians. Never have more than two players hit 50 homers in a season. This year five or six could. Some 20 could reach the 40-homer mark, compared with a previous record of eight, while three clubs—Baltimore, Oakland and Seattle—are on track to beat the Yankees' single-season record of 240 in 1961, the year of Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle.

The explanations have multiplied with the homers themselves. Filters, it is said, are more powerful and better trained than ever—which is true. Others blame the friendlier dimensions of the new downtown ballparks in cities like Baltimore, Cleveland and Denver. Umpires are criticised for shrinking the strike zone to little larger than a G-string, necessitating more of those fast balls down the middle upon which home run hitters feed. Then there is the old chestnut of the "juiced" ball, allegedly produced with its inner layers wrapped tighter to make it carry farther. That theory at least may be dismissed.

The most plausible reason is poor pitching, traceable to the 1993 expansion. The same amount of qual-

ity pitching must be spread around 28 teams instead of 26, a thinning of talent which inevitably shows up over a six month season of 162 games. But, one may ask, why does not the same argument apply to the hitting?

Either way, the game is changing. The \$2bn (£1.29bn) a year baseball industry is happy enough with the trend: after all, it argues, the fans love a slugfest, and baseball needs all the love it can get after the unforgotten and still unforgiven luxury of the players' strike of 1994/95. In fact, neither attendances nor television ratings have noticeably picked up since the onset of the home run glut.

The game meanwhile – especially in the slugger's paradise of the American League – is losing some of its subtler skills of base-running. No one steals home plate anymore: why take risks to manufacture one run when a single blast into the stands can bring you four? Which leads me to a final piece of advice in this era of homers by the handful. If you're in America this summer and contemplating a visit to a ballgame, bring a helmet.

SPORTING VERNACULAR

No 9 FRIENDLY

Three images from the "friendly" encounter between Newcastle and Manchester United at Wembley:

- Four Newcastle supporters grab a Manchester fan and swing him out over the Tube tracks.
- A Manchester supporter (male) and Newcastle fan (female) take turns to bellow "Red army" and "Toon army" at each other in rhythmic antiphony, noses inches apart and faces distorted with passion.
- A Newcastle fan slides up behind red-shirted supporters and spits expertly at their heads. He has done this so much that he is running out of saliva, which means no one notices and he does not get the fight he is clearly anxious to provoke.

The first two, almost incredibly, were jokey expressions of enmity which quickly resolved into mutual backslapping and laughter—the third was a nasty utterance of real malevolence. But, given the intensity of the rivalry expressed, who could confidently guarantee that the former might not tip over into the latter at any moment? Perhaps that is why the snakes people wear in the presence of these roaring exchanges

have a slightly strained look, a reminder that when primates grin it usually means they're frightened.

On the pitch you see similar ambiguities: Cantona wrenches an opponent to the ground, arousing the car-splitting indignation of the Newcastle crowd. What's "friendly" about that, you wonder, before Cantona, after looking suitably contrite for the referee, walks over to clasp his victim's shoulders, a gesture much closer to self-exculpation than it is to confession. "Look, we're friends," says, "I can't have fouled him."

In sporting terms, of course, a "friendly" is simply an encounter where the result doesn't really count ("point-less" might be a punning alternative). Watching a "friendly", with its theatre of attack and retaliation, it's possible to wonder whether the unique sort of "un-friendliness" fans display to each other offers one answer – a demonstration of how sport provides a place where aggression, rage and the will to defeat your opponent utterly can play safely in the open. If you're lucky, at least.

Hidden Personality
Quarries? The highest, which have persuaded selection panels to send for him in the national interest, despite everything. The types he has to answer to don't come across many who pose naked for women's magazines and appear on TV in bed with Paula Yates (albeit when fully clothed, and at breakfast time).



Ten years after: and the gang is crazier than ever

They were expected to be relegated straight away, but after a decade in the top flight, Wimbledon kick off on Saturday as part of the furniture. **Trevor Haylett** on the hard work behind the fairy-tale

A dietician called in on Wimbledon Football Club the other day. Robbie Earle, a super-fit 31-year-old, was told how he could maintain those lung-busting runs through another season, while Vinnie Jones discovered that with more carbohydrates and less protein, he could become a more effective performer.

Diet sheets and healthy living? Science never really figured highly in the Wimbledon culture. There was a time when the Crazy Gang would turn up its nose at these fangled ideas, turn up the volume on the ghetto-blasters and prepare to turn over another big-name Saturday opponent.

But times have changed and staying involved in what is now regarded as the world's finest league requires that Wimbledon pay heed to those changes. Jones, an honourable professional when he is not head-banging opponents, made sure all the younger players listened to what the dietician had to say.

Wimbledon's rawness has not disappeared completely, but things are more refined now than was the case

'Every player that comes here is taking a step up and possesses a hunger to become a better player'

10 years ago, it was in 1986 that those at the classy end of football's main street were forced to take note of the upstarts muscling in on their patch. Only a decade after they had been elected to the Football League, the unlikely heroes from south-west London were up there with the big boys, promoted to Division One.

Thankfully, the rich and famous breathed, Wimbledon would not be around for long, they would surely be one-season wonders. The pundits have fallen into that same trap every year since that 1986-87 campaign when, under Dave Bassett's inspirational leadership, the newcomers led the table after five games and finished a highly creditable sixth.

It is a remarkable story, one that salutes the capabilities of the little man if he brings spirit and determination to his work. Wimbledon be-

lieve they have never gained proper recognition for their achievements, but then they would say that, wouldn't they? They have a problem with perceived persecution. Remove their most vehement adversary would concede that they have a point.

In today's terms, a "Wimbledon" would be the equivalent of Stevenage Borough playing against Manchester United in the Premiership by 2007. Stevenage would then, in the succeeding 10 years, not only manage to hold on to their status but also pick up the FA Cup and qualify for Europe through their League position.

It is the stuff of fairy-tales, but if Wimbledon managed it, why not also the likes of the Vauxhall Conference champions? It is those who have done it who are convinced it will not happen again. "The Premier League breakaway, sponsorship, television deals, the Bosman repercussions, they all conspire to widen the gap between those at the top and those down below," says Laurie Sanchez, the man whose Wimbledon header against Liverpool gave Wimbledon the FA Cup in 1988 and set every non-league side dreaming the impossible.

"We were at Stevenage the other night and they were asking us what the secret was. With the changes that have happened already in the game and those that will follow, I can't see any other club doing what we did. As for us, it is going to be that much harder to stay in the Premiership for the next 10 years."

As the manager battling every day against the economic illiquidity of Wimbledon's survival, Joe Kinnear would be the first to support that assessment. He has forgone a summer holiday in order to scour Europe in an attempt to join the fashion for

foreign flair, but he was forced to return home empty-handed.

"The Shearer deal has done us no favours," Kinnear says. "Everyone abroad has run away with the idea that all English clubs have that sort of money to splash around. I was quoted £5m-plus for only average players in Russia and Scandinavia. When I protested they replied: 'But you are from England, you pay £15m for players, don't insult us with your low offers.'"

Despite the multi-million pound bounty arriving from the next Sky Television contract, money remains

the biggest obstacle for Wimbledon, who have just renewed their tenancy agreement with Crystal Palace for another five years. On average gates which, despite rising sharply last season, still struggled to exceed 13,000, their Premiership existence will always balance precariously, which is why the club's owner, Sam Hamman, so actively pursued a move to Dublin or Cardiff.

That now looks unlikely, so the old methods of keeping the club viable - buying players cheaply, selling them on for a nice profit - will be maintained, as will Wimbledon's at-

tention to a thriving youth policy (three FA Youth Cup semi-final appearances in the last five years). Wimbledon's one major summer acquisition, the £1.9m Millwall full-back Ben Thatcher, more than doubled their previous transfer record.

More importantly, it is the first time the close season did not signal any departures from the club. Thatcher is a typical Wimbledon buy. "Every player that comes here is taking a step up and possesses a hunger to become a better player," Kinnear says. "All of them have experienced the hardships of life. They see what

we have done for others, those like Warren Bartoo, who we took from Maidstone, converted into a player good enough for England and who then moved to Newcastle for £4m."

Thatcher cited "team spirit and attitude" as his prime reasons for joining. They are qualities successive players have put forward through the years to explain what makes Wimbledon special, even though, on occasion, it has brought disciplinary trouble.

Dean Holdsworth, the leading scorer for the past four seasons, says that while the Crazy Gang might not be so crazy now, old habits remain. "We used to get up to scrapes in the old days that we couldn't get away with now because of the publicity surrounding the game. We are a bit more cultured, maybe not so wild, but the atmosphere, the camaraderie is as good as ever," he says.

Dave Beasant, a Plough Lane veteran through nine seasons and the goalkeeper whose departure to Newcastle signalled the break-up of the 1988 Wimbledon winners, recalled the early times with affection. "I remember a time we were on an end-of-season tour in France, staying in dormitories and fed up that we had only got a £5 rise in our contracts. We stuck Dave Bassett against a wall, put a mattress in front of him and then laid into it with our fists, until he agreed to give us a bit more. I think that earned us another £1.50. We stuck together like the Three Musketeers, all for one and one for all."

Sanchez explains the bonds that tie together successive Wimbledon teams by relating the story of two new recruits who arrived in the summer and for whom the Wimbledon way proved an eye-opener. "We were away on a pre-season tour and after-

wards both said how amazed they were that all the players stayed out late at night and all worked hard the next day. No matter what time they got in, everyone was up at 8am for breakfast.

"During the long training runs, no one dared drop out because they didn't want to be seen to be weakening. At other clubs, they said there would always be one or two who fell by the wayside. Not here."

Apart from his Wimbledon winner, Sanchez also had the distinction of scoring the goal at Huddersfield in May 1986 that clinched promotion to the First Division. He ended his career at Swindon before taking his first job in management with Sligo Rovers. A year ago, the offer of a Wimbledon return as reserve team boss was too good to turn down.

"It is only when you go away that you realise how much Wimbledon are revered by clubs of a similar size. This is a unique club and the managers that followed Bassett, Bobby Gould and Don Howe and later Ray Harford, didn't try to change the methods that had been successful."

Wimbledon's League position in the top division 1988-96

1988-89	6th
1989-90	7th
1990-91	12th
1991-92	8th
1992-93	7th
1993-94	13th
1994-95	12th
1995-96	6th
1996-97	9th
1997-98	14th

After rejecting the opportunity last year to manage the Republic of Ireland, Kinnear feels more committed to the cash-strapped club than ever before. In January, Kinnear will celebrate five years in his unenvied job. "I don't mind admitting I would love to swap places with Alex Ferguson or Kevin Keegan for a while, just to see what an open cheque book looks like. Somehow I don't think they would be too willing to swap."

The next 10 years begin at Selhurst Park on Saturday when Manchester United are the season's first visitors. Despite the evidence of the last decade suggests it would be unwise to bet against Wimbledon's chances of pulling off another surprise.



New decade, new formation: Dave Bassett with his squad at Plough Lane (above). Joe Kinnear's side (top) has a more relaxed outlook after 10 years at the top
 Photographs: Herbie Knott

'It doesn't matter if you earn £37,000 per week, the body can only take so much. Suffering in pre-season is unavoidable'

For the past 16 years, I've faced blazing hot sunshine on the first day of pre-season training. Who says the British weather is unpredictable?

The last week of the holiday this year was dull and cool, but, unsurprisingly, the temperatures in that first tortuous week back in training consistently soared above 30 degrees.

Around the country, different teams have different regimes for that first day back. Some coax the players back to fitness slowly and gently. This measured, delicate build-up is said to minimise injuries and strains, and the players seem to like it, too. But other managers prefer the good old-fashioned technique, an approach which might be summarised as working them until they throw up in the sand dunes in the morning, before making them chase Michael Johnson's times on the track in the afternoon. At Tranmere, they favour the latter method.

It isn't too bad for me, being smaller and lighter. I can skip fairly easily up and over the sand dunes. It is the thick-set centre-halves and the like who have to come must eat thought of the horrors to come must eat away at the back of their minds all summer. Nagging whispers remind them that every extra beer, slice of pudding and day

without training will have to be paid for eventually. On that first day back, the scales won't lie and you can't cheat a sand duce. Looking around at the faces as we arrive at the dreaded dunes, various stereotypes are clearly visible.

There's the Beginner. A youth trainee, who probably arrived back from his holiday in Magaluf late last night, still a bit tipsy. His morning will end with him on all fours, throwing up in the sand, to general applause and laughter. In some cases, I have seen it end up in hospitalisation, to slightly less mirth.

Then there's the Sensible Pro. He has been ticking over all summer and has gradually built up his training regime over the last two or three weeks in preparation. He will do plenty of sweating, but because he is a fairly natural athlete anyway, he is unlikely to see this morning's breakfast again.

The Old Stager knows that he isn't a good runner, but he gives everything noce the less, even if he finishes two minutes behind the natural athletes. He probably gets more benefit from the dunes than anyone. Generally a journeyman, career player, he gets and deserves much of the respect but little of the money.

The Lazy Git wouldn't know a pain bearer if he tripped over one. A dying breed



Pat Nevin, the PFA chairman and veteran of too many dune runs with Tranmere, remembers the pains of outrageous training

in the modern game, this endangered species only survives if he is an extraordinarily and exceptionally talented individual. Or a goalkeeper.

The Snazzy is usually a youngster who says he hasn't done a thing all summer and tells everyone that he is really worried about it all. Omitting to mention that he was the county cross-country champion for the last two years, he effortlessly finishes way ahead of the field. This lad has a great first week, but suffers during the next week when the balls are brought out, since most of the others enjoy kicking smug hats.

Over the years I've tried countless methods of preparing for pre-season. At 18, I trained hard all the way through the summer without a break, setting off on 10-mile runs every other day. Youth can be so energetic, so zealous, so... totally stupid. If

I had kept up that regime, I would have to have retired before I was 30.

A couple of years ago, for the first time, I took a complete rest over the summer, having picked up a few injuries. Never again: the pain of trying to get back to peak fitness in three short weeks, from a state of flaccid torpor, was hell.

Another little-known problem with the first day of pre-season training is that it usually coincides with the first day of the school holidays. Any hopes of lazing about all afternoon in a bath or recovering by sloshing in front of the television are replaced by some harsher realities, like trudging around the zoo, a long walk in the forest or running after the little darlings at one of those new indoor kids' playzones. A visit to the swimming pool is a good compromise, as it's entertaining for the kids but also relaxing

for a weary footballer's legs. I rarely complain, however, because I know that some of the lads suffer far more than I do.

I knew one who slept downstairs on the couch because it was too painful to drag himself up the 14 steps at night. At those times, a visit to the toilet for him meant negotiating those stairs on all fours, although for most of us, coming downstairs in the morning means doing a fair impression of Frankenstein's monster with haemorrhoids.

Keeping with the lavatorial theme, following one especially heavy and unexpected weights session, a player confessed to me that he had so much pain in his chest and arms that wiping after a visit to the loo was impossible. I hope he took care of his own laundry.

After that same training session, another player almost crashed his car at a roundabout because he was unable to turn his steering wheel due to the pain. Before that, I'd often wondered why so many professional footballers needed big cars with power steering, now I knew.

It doesn't matter if you cost £15m and earn £37,000 per week: the human body can only take so much. Suffering during pre-season training is unavoidable because you cannot stay match fit for 52 weeks a year,

every year. Injuries that have been carried have to be given time to heal correctly. Muscles have to be allowed to strengthen again because over-fatigue leads to strains.

At the Professional Footballers' Association, we witness the effects of the stress, burn-out and injuries, with the high numbers of players who are forced to retire early from the game every year. There are just too many matches now. With play-offs, World Cups, European Championships and pre-season tours to Outer Mongolia, if the money is right, the seasons seem to merge into each other.

It's not all gloom, though. Training at a high level is addictive, and the adrenaline rush gives a real buzz. The weather is good and it is still a relatively short working day, so there is time to do other things. The season's worries are still in the future, there aren't the worries about last week's result, next week's result, the league position or even your own position. There are also the delights of the pre-season tour.

Sadly on last year's tour, my room-mate returned one morning blind drunk. Mistaking my bed for the toilet, he relieved himself all over it with me inside. At that moment, even the sand dunes seemed like a great place to be.

6 coming soon...

FOOTBALL: With a new season imminent, Glenn Moore examines the problems of the sport's new wealth

The game's future depends on balance

Two years ago Rick Parry, the chief executive of the Premier League, went to the United States to see what could be learned from American sports. While there, one senior executive said to him, "If you think you have problems now, wait until reality hits money comes into your game." Shortly afterwards, baseball's millionaires proved his point by going on strike.

English football has not come to that yet, but it is getting close. A strike is threatened, not among the Premiership's millionaires but by the relative paupers of the Nationwide League (what a good start for that sponsorship). Meanwhile, the likes of Fabrizio Ravanelli are taking home more in a week than the national average annual wage.

It all makes for differences in mood as the season starts. On the one hand the game is bigger, more fashionable and, arguably, more exciting than ever. The Charity Shield performances of Manchester United's players and Newcastle United's supporters left one drooling at the prospect of the season to come.

But, behind the gloss of the Premiership, there are problems. The crux of the Nationwide row is that all sides have a valid viewpoint. The First Division clubs are aware that the gap to the Premiership is growing so fast it could become insurmountable to all but the likes of Wolves. The rest are thus desperate to grab as much of the cake as possible.

That leaves the Second and Third Division clubs even further behind. It also threatens to squeeze the Professional Footballers' Association. Given the meteoric, and largely unforeseen, rise in television income, there is an argument for suggesting the PFA's customary 10 per cent cut from Football League TV deals could be reduced, as the PFA's members, the players, are being paid indirectly for performing on television through their clubs' ability to pay higher wages.

However, it appears that the PFA is the only body that can be trusted to have the wider interests of the game at heart. The PFA is not immune from politicking, but also has nothing like the internal problems of the FA - though that organisation is



Setting out English football's stall: Asprilla, Beckham, Shearer and May represented at least £25m of talent on show in the Charity Shield Photograph: Robert Hallam

improving. As for the clubs, most of them cannot see beyond their own overdraft.

One thing we can say with some certainty is that the next television deal with the Premiership is going to be staggeringly large. The future shape of the game will be decided by the way that money is distributed. This is why the PFA does not want to lose the battle with the League.

With the Bosman ruling likely to affect the small clubs' traditional life-line of transfer income, there is a need to establish a system of compensation and subsidy. Otherwise, the smaller clubs will not be able to justify the expense of bringing on young players. The obvious way to do this is to take off a large slice of Premiership television income before it reaches the clubs. If that was proposed, the PFA might be more amenable to reducing their cut.

Some chance. A few Premiership directors and chairmen have paid lip service to the idea, and so has Parry, but there has been no indication to date of it being instituted. If it does not happen, the long-term result will be the change to the kaleidoscopic nature of the English game, seeing it replaced by a more monolithic version, similar to the American sports scene, where a group of superclubs form a closed shop at the top.

It might be even worse. In America, the draft system and salary caps mean there is a measure of equality. Here, the Premiership is already forming into sub-divisions. There is a trio of clubs capable of winning the title, a clutch of other clubs which, with good management and financial

input, could break into that group, and a rump just hoping to stay above the relegation zone.

Among those are Sunderland and, while it may not last, it is good to see all three North-east clubs in the top flight. Sunderland are the poor neighbours, while the other two show the positive side of the new money flooding the game. Five seasons ago, Alan Shearer would have

been lost to Italy, while Ravanelli would never have left there. Part of the funds to buy them and pay them has come from TV, but much has been generated by the clubs themselves.

A similar story across the Premiership has created a division rich in skill and enterprise. Old players criticise the lack of "characters" in the game, but the foreign influx has meant that few clubs do not have at least one player worth watching.

The downside is the possible long-term consequence for the England team. Being able to train alongside Roberto Di Matteo may be a boon to Chelsea's England youth international Jody Morris, but it is no good if he cannot get into the team. The same applies to Rio Ferdinand at West Ham and Chris Holland at Newcastle.

In the short term, the national team looks in good hands. Glenn Hoddle is capable of maintaining the progress achieved by Terry Venables, and he will be grateful for the way his predecessor blooded a succession of young talents. Even England's World Cup draw now looks more friendly, as Italy flattered to deceive in Euro 96 and their Olympic Under-23 team fared even worse.

It is also a season of promise in European club football. There are still doubts about the mobility of Manchester United's central defence but their chances have been considerably enhanced by the ending of the foreign player restrictions. For the first time since English clubs returned to Europe there should be interest, post-Christmas, in the Champions' Cup.

Whether Manchester United can cope with both their European and domestic commitments is likely to determine the Premiership. United play football the right way, and have been a shining example in the development of young players, but a fourth title win in five years would not be good for the game.

Their shareholders would not agree, but it might not be good for United either. It may be hard to pre-empt at the time but every team needs to fall occasionally, it makes the successes all the sweeter. The trick is not to make a habit of it. Especially not starting with Saturday.

Three young talents ready to shine...

Emile Heskey

(Leicester City) Age 18. He looks like a heavyweight boxer - he is 6'2" and 13st - but has played most of his career so far on the left wing.

In time, he is likely to move inside to lead the attack, and he has already played there with good effect - he has seven goals in his 31 League appearances.

Versatile, Heskey can also play in midfield when required.

Tipped for a pre-season transfer and, even though he is Leicester-born and a former trainee, it will be a surprise if he is still at Filbert Street in a year's time.



David Beckham

(Manchester United) Age 21. Hardly a new name (37 League appearances to date), he was arguably United's best player in both of this year's Wembley appearances. But is yet to secure a role in the centre of midfield.

and now faces competition from Harel Pobersky in the wide right position. If he can keep his place with United he should be able to win one with England. He has awareness and imagination.

His willingness preparedness to work at his game is reflected in his improved crossing, while an encounter with Stuart Pearce last season showed he is no shirker.



Andy Gray

(Leeds United) Age 18. He was the redeeming feature of Leeds's Coca-Cola Cup final. Son of Frank, he has a readiness to run at defenders, and ability to go by them, which recalls his uncle Eddie. Only played 15 League games, but already appears positive and nervous.

English-born but the Scots have their eye on him. Having capped him at youth level they would have taken him on their pre-Euro 96 tour if Leeds had not preferred him to be rested. Leo Sharpe may be about to find the left-wing position is no easier to gain at Elland Road than at Old Trafford.



Andy Cole

(Manchester United) 'Cole the Goal' seems a sad memory now. Even his well-taken championship clincher at Middlesbrough was overshadowed by his subsequent abnormal FA Cup final display. His all-round game has improved, and he is still chirpy, but the constant failure - and Eric Cantona's withering glares - must be chipping away at his confidence.

Alex Ferguson made a point of telling him he would not have been sold if Shearer had signed but as it is he has had the worst possible start to the season, laid up with pneumonia while Scholes and Cruyff feast on Cantona's promptings.



David Platt

(Arsenal) The homecoming season turned into a battle for fitness and form. Played most of England's Euro 96 matches without capturing the form of old and is now in danger of losing his international place as well as the captaincy.

His problems stemmed from a persistent knee injury which prevented him from pursuing his strength - late runs into the box, while Arsenal's lack of a genuinely creative midfielder saw him miscast. He is only 30, but the nature of his game means he is likely to age quicker than most unless he can develop his game.



Juninho

(Middlesbrough) Rarely did he look the best young midfielder in the world last season, though that had as much to do with his being on a different plane to most of his team-mates. His international commitments did not help.

With Brazil qualifying automatically for the next World Cup, there should be fewer of those this season. Middlesbrough's other Brazilians and Fabrizio Ravanelli ought to be able to read his game. The Olympics may not have been the best preparation for a long English season, though, and we may need to remember he is only 23.



Money cannot compensate for the loss of a maestro

Luca Valdiserri considers what effect the exodus of talent from Italy to money-mad England may have in both countries

Rich and stupid. That was how the football world regarded the presidents of Italian clubs who showered Ajax with money to buy a player such as Dennis Bergkamp without realising that they also had to build around him the playing system in which he had previously flourished, or who imported English players such as Luther Blissett, who then became the favourite target of television satirists.

The departure to the Premiership of internationals such as Fabrizio Ravanelli and Roberto Di Matteo, preceded by Gianluca Vialli - who, in the last two seasons had been the emblem of revival at Juventus - has changed this perspective. And now Italians are convinced that English football clubs are rich, very rich. We will soon see whether they have also been stupid.

The first wave of emigrants with first-class tickets, a product of the Bosman case, has filled Italy with two sensations: one of losing some of the leading lights of their national sport and one of being a nation that now thinks of business and not just of fun. The most telling case is that of Fabrizio Ravanelli, sold to Middlesbrough for 18 billion lire (£7m). Ravanelli had cost a little over 4 billion when his transfer from Reggina in 1992 was cashed through by a telephone call from Walter Veltroni, a PDS politician and vice-president of the Council in the present Prodi government, to the then president of Reggina, Ernesto Fiacadori. Veltroni is an ardent Juventus supporter and Fiacadori was also president of Coop, the co-operative tied to the former Italian Communist Party.

The sale of Ravanelli - who scored the decisive goal in the European Cup final against Ajax in Rome last May - would in the past have been seen by Juventus supporters as the greatest of betrayals. But these days, faced by such an offer, no one has second thoughts about taking such a money-making opportunity: neither supporters nor the media.



The Italians who were made an offer they couldn't refuse: Gianluca Vialli, Roberto Di Matteo and Fabrizio Ravanelli Photograph: Allsport

This players' diaspora could be an opportunity to transform Italy's provincial footballing mentality: having players abroad and watching leagues as competitive or more so than the Italian league might dispel the illusion that Italian football is the best in the world. Nigeria's victory in the Olympic tournament underlined how it is no longer enough to have a tradition, such as Italy, Brazil and Germany have, for being No 1.

For England it could on the other hand be the chance to enrich the technical vocabulary of their own footballers. Silvio Berlusconi's Milan became a superpower through their technical and tactical superiority, but also and above all through the professionalism and the example of the Dutch trio of Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten and Frank Rijkaard.

Vialli, Ravanelli and Di Matteo: three footballers of national importance, and three very

different cases. The Vialli move is a fruit of the Bosman case, in that he was released on a free transfer. Juventus had anyhow decided not to count on him for the future. His fee for re-signing was too high, especially given the team's cost-cutting policy.

Ravanelli was a market-driven move in the old manner: once upon a time it was the Italians who would commit any madness to get their hands on a proven goalscorer - now it is the English. It is not a case of the Italian football market having changed course: nowadays they still look for young players from abroad, such as Kanu for Internazionale.

Di Matteo is, for Italian followers of the game, the real blow: he is a young player who does not look on moving to England as a way of making do (Ravanelli has said more often than not that, had it been left to him, he would never have left Juventus), and who occupies a midfield position on

which the tempo and rhythm of the whole national team depends. He is an Italian international at the height of his powers and, like his partner in the team, Demetrio Albertini, one with a guaranteed future.

Di Matteo is thus the most surprising inclusion in this exodus: Italian teams should not have let him escape. But the reality of football is often more complex than it at first appears. Juventus, in recent years, have sold Roberto and Dino Baggio, Vialli and Ravanelli, Jürgen Kohler and Andy Möller, and yet have won the championship, the Champions' Cup, and the Uefa Cup.

Manchester United and Newcastle have bought and spent as hard as they can, but have made no progress in Europe. The superiority of Italian clubs over these English ones may reside, in the end, in matters of organisation and in details. One example could be in players' physical preparation. The impression, seen from abroad, is that Eng-

lish teams have yet to assimilate the importance of finding specific and different training programmes for each player.

Juventus believed so strongly in this that their fitness trainer, Giampiero Ventrone, a former Italian naval officer, was as important as, if not more than, one of their top players. The same applied at Berlusconi's Milan where the fitness trainer, Vincenzo Pincolini, was prevented from leaving by the president himself: he wanted to move to Parma, but the red and black team would have more happily given up Weah or Roberto Baggio.

The Italians, on the other hand, envy England with all their hearts its contracts for television rights. In these England has found an Eldorado, where the renaissance of English football started. But in Italy the relationship between football and television has always been governed by political battles and handled by people with little

professional involvement in the game. The last negotiations for the sale of all television rights for all Italian football was absolutely grotesque. Vittorio Cecchi Gori, the president of Fiorentina and a leading figure in the Italian film industry, surpassed but failed to cover financially the offer made by RAI, the state television channel.

Perhaps the next development will be in the market for football managers. The Italians would come out on top in the championship for bank balances and, in this case, Italy would once again bring home the spoils from foreign tournaments.

Comparisons between Italy and England will be a fraught subject again during qualification for the 1998 World Cup in France. The new qualifying formula does not guarantee that both teams qualify directly: one of the two, assuming that they should finish above Poland, Georgia and Moldova, will have to go to a play-off to qualify. In Italy before the recent European Championship, few would have feared a qualifying group with England as the main adversary. For too many years the England team had disappointed at international level.

But Euro 96 changed the perspective. England went a long way, reaching the semi-finals before losing on penalties to Germany, while Italy went out in the first round. For the Azzurri this setback may have been of long-term benefit: there is no team like the Italians for excelling themselves in adversity and losing when in a position of safety. The match against the Czech Republic, in Liverpool, was the best example of this.

Italian opinion of the England team was also raised by Paul Ince's performance in the championship. The Internazionale midfielder started off badly and the criticism-free, game, "But Ince, in the second half of Euro 96, had showed himself to be an excellent player. He will never be a Maradona, but no one in Italy can any longer doubt his quality. And if Ince can be Glenn Hoddle's "spy" on how the Italians play, so Di Matteo and Ravanelli will now be able to even things out.

Luca Valdiserri writes for Corriere della Sera

صكزا من الاربعين

8 racing

Call for cut in betting tax

The British Horseracing Board will today publish details of its submission to the Treasury, asking for help in November's Budget to ease the sport's Lottery-induced financial crisis. In what is, in effect, a 19-page begging letter, the BHB asks for a reduction in betting duty of 1.75 per cent, and makes it clear that the livelihoods of thousands of people may depend on whether Kenneth Clarke is persuaded by their arguments.

The most significant aspect of the BHB's submission is its contention that a duty cut should be split between a direct cash injection for the racing industry and a further reduction in the betting "tax" paid by punters, in order to stimulate betting turnover. The BHB would like 0.75 per cent to go to racing via the Levy, with the remaining one per cent returned to punters via a cut in their deductions to eight per cent. The

Greg Wood reports on the British Horseracing Board's appeal to the government to aid an industry threatened by the Lottery

bookmakers, in a separate submission to the Treasury, asked for a 1.5 per cent cut in duty, all of which would be passed on to their customers.

The Chancellor's Budget speech in November will thus mark the first major test of the political connections of Lord Wakeham, which were thought to be a significant factor in his appointment to succeed Lord Hartington as chairman of the BHB.

"Racing's submission is compelling, well documented and clearly argued," Lord Wakeham said yesterday. "Years of over-taxation of betting and the consequent depression of the industry have reached a point where really taking their toll. Racing urgently needs a significant injection of funds to enable it to flourish."

The BHB's submission also offers an interesting summary of the state of British racing, and what a state it appears to be in. It points out how poorly we compare to other major racing countries in terms of the percentage of betting turnover returned to the industry, and notes that there is "a disturbing decline in investment in two-year-olds" and "an exodus of high-quality bloodstock abroad for breeding purposes." Owners, meanwhile, face one of the poorest risk-to-reward ratios anywhere in the world.

Clearly, it is in the BHB's interests to secure a significant injection of funds, but it is hard to disagree with the conclusion that "unless significant investment is made immediately, racing will face a dramatic decline."

What such a decline might mean in human terms is set out in a study by KPMG Management Consulting which accompanies the BHB document. "The Economic Value of the British Horseracing and Breeding Industry" concludes that in 1995, racing and betting provided employment, both directly and indirectly, for more than 100,000 people. In rural areas, where alternative employment is often scarce, the industry employed the equivalent of one in eight agricultural workers. In major training centres such as Newmarket and Lambourn, meanwhile, at least a third and up to a half of all jobs in the area depend on racing.

Many of these local economies, as well as hundreds of betting shops, will be at risk of collapse if the alarming decline in betting turnover caused by the National Lottery is not reversed. The future of top-class racing in the country where the thoroughbred was created could now depend first on whether the Chancellor appreciates the scale of the problem, and then on whether he is prepared to assist in its solution. With income tax cuts an obvious priority, this must be doubtful.

As the BHB's submission points out, "racing's appeal is clearly very deep-rooted, despite the uneconomic terms on which it has been conducted, which would have led to its virtual extinction elsewhere." Even the deepest roots, though, are little protection in the face of the force 10 gale which the Lottery represents. Let us hope that Lord Wakeham, a former Government chief whip, has not lost his touch in the black arts of political persuasion.

Wakeham: 'closely argued'

Chasers stand four square

For what is believed to be the first time since the War, other than in two-runner races, an entire field returned the same starting price at Southwell yesterday.

Durable Cliche in comfort zone

Ratings
LUKE ARDLEY

Classic Cliche should gain one of those straightforward victories to which horses of his class are occasionally entitled, if he goes for the Group Two Geoffrey Freer Stakes at Newbury on Saturday.

The last reigning Ascot Gold Cup winner to take the contest was Andross, in 1981 and 1982 - when he gave Lester Piggott his 4,000th winner - and Godolphin's chief standard bearer is likely to tread the same route to the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, in which Andross finished second to Akydes.

Classic Cliche has proved the most durable of Godolphin's classic winners and his battling qualities brought out his best performance in defeat by Pentire in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes, which was run in an exceptional time. The son of Salsar can now be rated as high as 133.

This year's St Leger aspirants can only suffer by comparison with last year's victor, as the representative of what is now an exceptional crop, emerging as an exceptional crop.

Even allowing for the 10th penalty Classic Cliche will have to carry, Dushyantpur would have a lot to find on Saturday, in terms of temperament as well as ability. Neither Henry Cecil's charge nor any of the three-year-olds left in the Geoffrey Freer Stakes look up to St Leger standard.

SANDOWN

HYPERION
5.45 Tattika 7.15 Pearl Venture
6.15 Phylida 7.45 Piffal (nb)
6.45 Tattika 8.15 Gane Savage

GOING: Straight course - Good to Firm (Good in places); Round course - Good (Good on Firm in places).

STALLS: Straight course - far side, remainder - inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: High numbers have considerable advantage in 5f races.

BEHIND FIRST TIME: 1st 100m, 2nd 100m, 3rd 100m, 4th 100m, 5th 100m, 6th 100m, 7th 100m, 8th 100m, 9th 100m, 10th 100m, 11th 100m, 12th 100m, 13th 100m, 14th 100m, 15th 100m, 16th 100m, 17th 100m, 18th 100m, 19th 100m, 20th 100m, 21st 100m, 22nd 100m, 23rd 100m, 24th 100m, 25th 100m, 26th 100m, 27th 100m, 28th 100m, 29th 100m, 30th 100m, 31st 100m, 32nd 100m, 33rd 100m, 34th 100m, 35th 100m, 36th 100m, 37th 100m, 38th 100m, 39th 100m, 40th 100m, 41st 100m, 42nd 100m, 43rd 100m, 44th 100m, 45th 100m, 46th 100m, 47th 100m, 48th 100m, 49th 100m, 50th 100m, 51st 100m, 52nd 100m, 53rd 100m, 54th 100m, 55th 100m, 56th 100m, 57th 100m, 58th 100m, 59th 100m, 60th 100m, 61st 100m, 62nd 100m, 63rd 100m, 64th 100m, 65th 100m, 66th 100m, 67th 100m, 68th 100m, 69th 100m, 70th 100m, 71st 100m, 72nd 100m, 73rd 100m, 74th 100m, 75th 100m, 76th 100m, 77th 100m, 78th 100m, 79th 100m, 80th 100m, 81st 100m, 82nd 100m, 83rd 100m, 84th 100m, 85th 100m, 86th 100m, 87th 100m, 88th 100m, 89th 100m, 90th 100m, 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A breathing space in Chechnya

The battles may be over – but will the ceasefire last?
Helen Womack reports

Moscow – Russian and Chechen commanders were reported to have agreed to a ceasefire yesterday, the first sign that the bloody battles over Grozny might be coming to a close – for now.

After eight days of fighting in the Chechen capital, Russian media said that a ceasefire would come into effect at noon today local time. But it was not clear whether the ceasefire was intended to be permanent or merely a temporary measure to allow the evacuation of civilians and wounded.

If it holds, it will be a signal victory for Alexander Lebed, President Boris Yeltsin's security chief and envoy to Chechnya. The news came after Russia's military commander in Chechnya, General Konstantin Pulikovskiy, held talks with the rebel chief of staff, Aslan Maskhadov. The meeting began in the early evening in the village of Novye Atagi, 15 miles south of the regional capital.

"The issue of a ceasefire and, possibly, the mechanism for a withdrawal of units and subunits from the confrontation line are expected to be discussed," said the Interfax news agency before the meeting began.

The tentative peace process was set in motion by General Lebed, who on Sunday made a lightning visit to the war zone to meet Mr Maskhadov and returned to Moscow on Monday saying he was optimistic a ceasefire could soon be arranged.

However, there was no reaction from the Kremlin yesterday to his criticism of the Russian government's policy in the Caucasus, and the demands he made for sweeping powers to manage the crisis himself.

In all probability, his sharp comments, made at a press conference, will have set off bitter infighting in the corridors of power. In particular, General Lebed will not have endeared himself to the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, a rival even before the general assumed the commission Mr Chernomyrdin heads of failing dismally in his handling of Chechnya.

A small change occurred in the Kremlin yesterday with the



Russian soldiers carry a dead comrade into a safe area of Grozny during fighting on Sunday with Chechen rebels

Photograph: Vassily Detchkov/AP

departure of President Yeltsin's press spokesman, Sergei Medvedev, a young journalist who, at his own request, was returning to the ORT state television channel where he used to work. Lately the television has seemed almost as restricted as in Soviet times although one anchorwoman, Arina Sharapova, has let it be known by small comments that the journalists are disgusted by the war in Chechnya. It was probably not accidental that, the other night, the news was followed by a popular Caucasian cartoon about a tiny ant outwitting a bullying elephant.

Certainly the Chechen rebels, who infiltrated Grozny last

week with the express intention of spoiling President Yeltsin's inauguration celebrations, have run rings round the far larger and much better equipped Russian army.

Yesterday mortar shells were crashing over Grozny as the federal forces tried to retake key buildings in the city centre still held by the separatists.

Rebel information chief Movladi Udugov, who has been so skilled at presenting Chechnya's case that General Lebed himself praised him while saying the Russian spokesmen should go and "fish and pick raspberries at their dachas", claimed yesterday that the separatists controlled 75 to 80 per

cent of Grozny. Eyewitnesses said rebels seemed to roam the streets at will while most of the Russian soldiers they saw were dead ones. The toll among servicemen is now officially 221 killed and 766 wounded.

Waves of refugees were trying to flee Grozny. The pro-Moscow Chechen government complained that Russian forces were firing on civilians and appealed to the army to open a corridor to let them out of the burning city.

"Tens of thousands of people are trapped... without food supplies and with a catastrophic lack of medicine," it said. The army apparently dislikes the idea of a corridor because it fears rebels could

escape by melting into the crowd of refugees.

The Russian migration service said it had received 10 billion roubles (£1.3m) to cope with the new homeless. The European Commission in Brussels approved a new aid package for Chechnya, bringing the total assistance since the outbreak of war 20 months ago to nearly £29m. More than 30,000 people have died in the fighting and survivors are desperate for food and medical aid.

The pro-government ORT suggested the rebels were behind the slaying, and Khadzhiyev, an ethnic Chechen, had received many threats from the rebels, who accused him of a pro-Moscow bias in his reporting and of betraying his people. He was the 19th journalist to die in the 20-month-old conflict.

Ramzan Khadzhiyev, who covered the North Caucasus for the television station ORT, was shot in the head twice as he was driving out of Grozny with his wife and four-year-old son. Independent NTV television aired a brief interview with a passenger in the car who said it was Russian forces who opened fire on the vehicle.

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Old and infirm left to suffer daily ordeal of bombardment

The people living in Chernorechiye had no knowledge of any ceasefire yesterday. They came under mortar attack mid-morning as planes circled overhead, stretching their nerves to the limit.

This district on the south-west edge of Grozny showed signs of heavy bombardment from the last week of fighting.

Strashed tree branches lay in deserted streets pockmarked with mortar craters. People hung around outside their apartment buildings, not venturing far into the courtyard in case another mortar whistled in.

It was noon when the latest attack began. The night had been quiet, residents said, although they still slept in their cellars. "We heard that Moscow announced an end to air strikes but the planes bombed again yesterday and today, just look what happened," said one Russian woman pointing at the crater and shrapnel marks gnawed in the side of the building.

"It was a deception. They deceive us every time," she added. This time, only one man was

Civilians are still awaiting relief from war, reports **Carlotta Gall** in Grozny

slightly wounded, but in the next courtyard where a second mortar fell, an old woman was killed outright and a one-year-old baby, hit in the head by shrapnel, had been taken to the hospital, residents said.

The elderly victim lay in the cellar under white sheets as neighbours gathered to dig another grave. The garden of an abandoned psychiatric hospital was being turned into a cemetery for the dozens who had been killed, one woman said.

"We hurried five people in a single grave," said Khesir Dzhapkayev, a telephone engineer. He just escaped injury this time, bolting into the cellar where his family of four children and his mother were sheltering.

Some 20 to 30 people were in the bunker, a dark warren of nooks and crannies. People ducked under water pipes, lighting their way with matches. Mr Dzhapkayev's paralysed moth-

er lay on the earthen floor on a mattress in a tiny pantry.

"This is the third time we have had to live down here. It is an absolute nightmare," he said, shaking from the strain. "This is not even safe – how do I know it will not be hit with a penetrator bomb?"

The fear is real. Less than a block away a penetration bomb had torn through every floor of an apartment building, blasting right down into the cellar.

The only people left in Chernorechiye are, as in the early days of the war, the old, the infirm and many Russians who, unlike the Chechens, have no family network to help them.

Chechen refugees were still pouring out of this district, driving along the tram lines, crossing two dangerously precarious bridges over the Sunzha River, half patched up since they were destroyed in the first battle.

Families with small children

and old women scrambled down a muddy bank as the men frantically pushed cars along the rails. Mortars had landed in the field beside them minutes before. A grandmother collapsed, her family in tears.

The sound of heavy artillery explosions rolled across from the centre of the city every five or 10 minutes – less intensive than in recent days, but still more or less constant.

A silent procession followed: a young man carrying a wounded, retarded boy and a group bearing a woman on a mattress, who was unconscious, her face marked by shrapnel.

Behind them the sky was black from four fires burning in the western district where Grozny's oil refinery appears completely destroyed.

The Chechen fighters meanwhile, who have the rule of the district, said they would demand by Russia before easing up their stranglehold on Russian positions. "The war will not end until their troops leave," said Aslan, 21, as he walked back from fighting in the centre.

Bosnia set for imperfect poll

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Bosnian elections in a month's time will fall far short of Western democratic standards, United States officials said yesterday, as the Secretary of State Warren Christopher conferred with Nato civilian and military leaders in Brussels.

But the Nato Secretary-General, Javier Solana, stressed how much had been achieved in the past eight months, since the Nato-led peace implementation force (I-For) moved into the war-torn country.

A State Department

spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said: "These are not going to be pristine conditions for these elections. This is not going to look like a town in Germany or France... on election day. We're not going to create these conditions in the next 31 days."

The admission came as the commander of the Nato-led ground forces in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, helped defuse a confrontation with the Bosnian Serbs who had refused to allow Nato troops to inspect part of a heavy weapons storage site as they were entitled to do under the Dayton peace agreement.

Dr Solana and General George Joulwan, Nato's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, had visited the Bosnian Serb capital of Pale on Monday afternoon to secure formal agreement that the site could be inspected. But, as so often happens in Bosnia, it took time for the agreement to filter down to the commanders on the ground, and a Nato source in Sarajevo said it "came as a surprise" to many Serb leaders.

Early yesterday morning

General Walker took the new Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, in a helicopter to the arms site at Han Pijesak, 30 miles east of Sarajevo, where the

Bosnian Serbs had refused to allow Nato inspection teams access on Monday. Nato officials said the move was, in part, to test the influence of Dr Plavsic, who replaced the indicted war-crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic as President. General Walker returned to Sarajevo late yesterday morning, after completing the inspection.

Mr Christopher met Dr Solana and General Joulwan in Brussels, to discuss the support I-For might provide for the forthcoming elections which aim to create common institutions for the whole of Bosnia, above the two "entities" – the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska. Although the Dayton peace agreement aims to maintain a unified, multi-ethnic Bosnia, in reality Bosnia is now firmly partitioned. The three factions have consistently tried to deter

Bosnia's hundreds of thousands of refugees from voting in their

places of origin, as Dayton allows them to.

Mr Burns said Mr Christopher would discuss this with the Presidents of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia in Geneva today, along with the harassment of the media and the failure of local authorities in Bosnia and the governments of neighbouring states to hand over indicted war criminals for trial in the Hague.

Having completed the hand-over of large areas under the Dayton agreement and separated the armed forces of the former protagonists, I-For's 50,000 troops are now primarily concerned with creating the best possible conditions for the elections. This includes opening up roads and "creating the environment" in urban areas.

Some 2,000 monitors from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other international organisations are expected to oversee the elections.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Leaders of 300 illegal immigrants fighting to have their position in France regularised said their protest was being stepped up and they would now negotiate only with President Jacques Chirac. They were speaking the day after police raided the Paris church the group has occupied for three months and removed 10 hunger-strikers "for medical checks". All have returned to the church and are continuing their fast. A "rolling hunger-strike" by "star" volunteers for 48 hours at a time has been announced, and the protest is to be extended to more cities. *Mary Dejevsky – Paris*

The first Filipino to admit publicly that she was a Japanese sex-slave during World War Two said that she and six other "comfort women" would accept \$18,500 (£12,300) each in compensation from a much-criticised Japanese fund. Maria Rosa Henson, 66, said she also expected to receive a letter of apology from the Japanese Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, without which she would not accept the money. "The apology is more important to me than the money," Mrs Henson said. "Without the apology, I will not take the money." *Reuter – Manila*

Krista Sager, co-leader of the Greens, shocked Germany's political third force by announcing she would not seek re-election. The German Greens are Europe's strongest environmentalist party; they have won office at federal state level and moderates hope to ally with the Social Democrats (SPD) to oust Chancellor Helmut Kohl's centre-right coalition in 1998 polls. Ms Sager, who belongs to the wing of the party more inclined to co-operation with the SPD, said she would focus on helping the Greens at regional level in Hamburg. *Reuter – Bonn*

Bulgaria's President, ministers and diplomats joined mourners at the funeral of the psychic Granny Vanga. Vanga, venerated across the Balkans and beyond for her clairvoyant and healing powers, died on Sunday aged 85 after a four-year battle against cancer. Blind from childhood, she was said to have predicted events ranging from the Second World War to the collapse of Communism and her own death. *Reuter – Ruzica*

Police arrested three former Bangladeshi army officers in connection with the 1975 assassination of the independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Retired army colonel Farook Rehaman, ex-colonel Shahriar Rashid Khan and retired major Mohammad Khairuzzaman are to face trial for murder and for rebelling against a legally-installed government. *Reuter – Dhaka*

A French mountaineer, Jean-Christophe Lafaille, set a world record by climbing two Himalayan peaks more than 8,000m high (26,240ft) in less than four days. Lafaille, 31, climbed Gasherbrum II, 8,035m, then Gasherbrum I, 8,068m, in the Baltoro region of Pakistan on 28-31 July. *Reuter – Grenoble*

Bucharest's street children will train stray dogs as helpers for the handicapped in a programme tackling two of the city's worst social problems. Initially 20 children living rough will be helped for two years to train strays which will then be given to the blind, the deaf and the immobile. *Reuter – Bucharest*

Thirty monkeys that were killed when they touched a high-voltage wire were given a mass burial by priests from the Lord Pashupatinath temple. Nepal's holiest. An official said monkeys were gods and that more ceremonies were to be performed for them today. *Reuter – Kathmandu*

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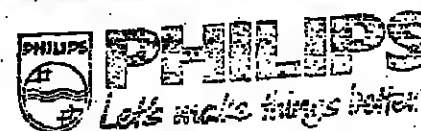


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ON SUNDAY



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PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

HOW TO ENTER

Using your football knowledge decide your team formation from the following four options:

FORMATION A. 4-4-2

4 Defenders, 4 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION B. 4-3-3

4 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 3 Strikers

FORMATION C. 5-3-2

5 Defenders, 3 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION D. 3-5-2

3 Defenders, 5 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

You are free to enter as many teams as you wish, allowing you to try out more than one tactical formation, but each team must be made as a separate entry via a separate telephone call. Once you have chosen your formation, select your team of 10 players to fit your chosen option, plus one goalkeeper and



one manager from the list below. Players can only play in the positions that they are listed under and the team's total value must not exceed £40 million. Remember to give your team a name. Use our Team Selection form above right, to make a note of your team's details, then dial our registration hotline to register. Where possible, please try to use a tone telephone, although a traditional pulse telephone can be used if necessary. Make sure you follow the instructions on the phone line carefully. At the end of your call you will be given your own special PIN number, which you must keep safe. It can be added to your Team Selection form.

HOW TO SCORE

Every time one of your players scores a goal you will be awarded four points. Four points will also be awarded for goalkeepers and defenders whose team have kept a clean sheet during a match. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one-goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded one bonus point in addition to the stan-

dard four points awarded for that goal. Each successful assist (a pass that, in the opinion of our team of experts, leads directly to a goal) will give a player three points. The opinion of our experts on this matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

Players lose one point for a yellow card and three for a red card. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count for scoring purposes.

The Premiership manager that you choose will be awarded three points if their real-life team win, one point if they draw and no points if they lose.

Results will be published in The Independent every Wednesday for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent on Sunday.

Look out for transfer opportunities which will be announced during the season. Please read the Rules and Conditions carefully before making your call.

Team Selection Form

Name	Code	Value
Goalkeeper		
Defender 1		
Defender 2		
Defender 3		
Defender 4		
Defender 5		
Midfielder 1		
Midfielder 2		
Midfielder 3		
Midfielder 4		
Midfielder 5		
Striker 1		
Striker 2		
Striker 3		
Manager		

PIN No. Total £

Team Name:

POINT SCORES:
4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

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UK 0891-252-244 (tone)

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UK calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times. Republic of Ireland calls cost 59p per minute including VAT at all times. Maximum call length 65 minutes.

INDEPENDENT TEAM MARKET

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	VALUE (£m)
GOALKEEPERS				457	Watson	EVE	2.7	553	Reeves	WIM	1.8	687	Woon	NOT	3.4	856	Claridge	LEI	3.0
300	Seaman	ARS	5.9	458	Cusworth	EVE	3.0	554	Thorn	WIM	1.8	688	Bart-Williams	NOT	3.6	857	Heskey	LEI	2.8
303	Bosnich	AV	4.0	459	Hottiger	EVE	2.2	555	Thatcher	WIM	2.7	689	Stone	NOT	5.0	858	Robins	LEI	2.0
304	Flowers	BLA	5.2	460	Hinchcliffe	EVE	1.9	MIDFIELDERS				690	Gemmell	NOT	3.0	859	Cantona	MU	8.1
305	Kharin	CHE	3.7	463	Jobson	LEE	2.7	600	Merson	ARS	4.4	693	Parker	LEI	2.5	860	Scholes	MU	5.0
306	Hitchcock	CHE	1.5	464	Kelly	LEE	3.6	603	Platt	ARS	4.8	694	Taylor	LEI	1.6	863	Chol	MU	6.2
307	Ogrizovic	COV	2.2	465	Wetherall	LEE	3.5	604	Parlour	ARS	2.4	695	Izzett	LEI	2.1	864	Fjortoft	MID	3.1
308	Filan	COV	1.5	466	Dorigo	LEE	3.2	605	Helder	ARS	3.7	696	Waddle	SW	2.7	865	Ravanelli	MID	8.0
309	Southall	EVE	3.0	467	Pemberton	LEE	1.2	606	Hillier	ARS	1.5	697	Blinker	SW	2.2	866	Barnby	MID	6.7
330	Martyn	LEE	3.3	468	Walsh	LEE	2.2	607	Taylor	AV	1.9	698	Jones	SW	2.0	867	Beardsley	NEW	4.4
333	James	LIV	4.7	469	Grayson	LEE	1.2	608	Townsend	AV	3.1	699	Hyde	SW	1.8	868	Asprilla	NEW	7.4
335	Lea	LIV	1.5	470	Whitlow	LEE	2.2	609	Draper	AV	4.1	700	Magilton	SOT	2.4	869	Ferdinand	NEW	8.6
336	Hoult	DER	1.6	473	Watts	LEE	1.6	630	Dennis	BLA	3.0	703	Venison	SOT	2.7	870	Saunders	NOT	5.2
337	Schmeichel	MU	5.5	474	Babb	LIV	3.7	633	Witox	BLA	3.7	704	Heaney	SOT	2.2	873	Roy	NOT	4.8
338	Walsh	MID	3.0	475	Jones	LIV	2.7	634	Ripley	BLA	3.0	705	M Gray	SUN	3.0	874	Campbell	NOT	3.1
339	Strick	NEW	3.7	476	Wright	LIV	2.8	635	Sherrwood	BLA	3.4	706	Rae	SUN	2.7	875	Booth	SW	4.4
340	Hisp	NEW	3.7	477	Ruddock	LIV	3.0	636	Pittcroft	BLA	3.0	707	Agnew	SUN	1.0	876	Hirst	SW	5.5
343	Crossley	NOT	2.7	478	Scales	LIV	4.4	637	Gullit	CHE	4.4	708	Anderson	TOF	6.7	877	Bright	SW	2.5
344	Wright	NOT	1.3	479	Harkness	LIV	2.2	638	Di Matteo	CHE	4.4	709	Fox	TOF	5.6	878	Le Tissier	SOT	7.0
345	Beasant	SOT	1.8	480	Neville (G)	MU	3.7	639	Wise	CHE	2.7	730	Hawthells	TOF	3.2	879	Shipperley	SOT	3.7
346	Pressman	SW	2.7	483	Neville (P)	MU	3.7	640	Newton	CHE	2.4	733	Shannon	TOF	3.0	880	Watson	SOT	2.2
347	Cotton	SUN	1.8	484	Irwin	MU	4.1	643	Peacock	CHE	2.1	734	Whitfield	WH	3.6	883	Kelly	SUN	2.3
348	Walker	TOT	3.4	485	Pallister	MU	4.9	644	Salako	COV	2.4	735	Luminari	WH	3.7	884	Stewart	TOT	7.4
349	Mikolajski	WH	3.0	486	May	MU	3.0	645	Telfer	COV	1.8	736	Hughes	WH	2.7	885	Sherringham	TOT	5.9
350	Sullivan	WIM	1.8	487	Vickers	MID	2.2	646	Richardson	COV	2.4	737	Moore	WH	2.7	886	Armstrong	TOT	7.4
DEFENDERS				488	Pearson	MID	2.2	647	McAlister	COV	3.0	738	Bishop	WH	3.8	887	Rosenthal	TOT	2.1
400	Dixon	ARS	3.1	489	Whyte	MID	2.2	648	Jess	COV	2.2	739	Jones	WIM	2.8	888	Futre	WH	4.0
403	Winterburn	ARS	3.1	490	Cox	MID	2.5	649	Simpson	DER	1.2	740	Farrell	WIM	3.1	889	Raducioiu	WH	5.1
404	Bould	ARS	3.0	493	Albert	NEW	4.1	650	Asanovic	DER	2.2	743	Ardley	WIM	2.0	890	Dowie	WH	3.3
405	Adams	ARS	5.3	494	Howey	NEW	3.7	653	Van Der Laan	DER	1.6	744	Ear	WIM	2.0	893	Holdsworth	WIM	4.5
406	Kown	ARS	3.7	495	Peacock	NEW	3.0	654	Ebbrell	EVE	1.9	STRIKERS				894	Goodman	WIM	3.2
407	Stanton	AV	3.0	496	Barton	NEW	3.3	655	Kanchelskis	EVE	6.7	800	Bergkamp	ARS	7.0	895	Ekoku	WIM	2.7
408	Southgate	AV	3.2	497	Beresford	NEW	2.2	656	Parkinson	EVE	1.8	803	Wright	ARS	7.2	MANAGERS			
409	McGrath	AV	3.0	498	Cooper	NOT	3.0	657	Stuart	EVE	2.5	804	Hartson	ARS	3.7	900	Kearney	NEW	8.0
430	Ehigie	AV	3.0	499	Chettle	NOT	2.4	658	Grant	LEE	2.2	806	Yorke	AV	6.7	903	Ferguson	MU	9.0
433	Wright	AV	3.4	500	Jerkin	NOT	2.9	659	Brown	LEE	3.0	807	Milioski	AV	4.4	904	Law	LEI	7.0
434	Tiler	AV	1.2	503	Lytle	NOT	1.8	660	Wallace	LEE	1.8	808	Johnson	AV	3.5	905	Bloch	ARS	6.0
435	Berg	BLA	3.4	504	Pearce	NOT	3.4	663	Palmer	LEE	3.0	809	Jordan	AV	2.4	906	Royce	EVE	5.5
436	Le Saux	BLA	4.0	505	Mfonkou	SOT	2.5	664	Barnes	LIV	3.0	830	Shearer	NEW	11.1	907	Harford	BLA	5.5
437	Coleman	BLA	3.7	506	Dodd	SOT	2.2	665	Redknapp	LIV	5.2	834	Sutton	BLA	3.7	908	Francis	TOT	3.8
438	Hendry	BLA	4.4	507	Benali	SOT	2.2	666	McManaman	LIV	5.9	835	Vialli	CHE	8.1	909	Wilkinson	LEE	3.8
439	Kenna	BLA	1.9	508	Charlton	SOT	2.2	667	McAteer	LIV	3.7	836	Hughes	CHE	4.4	930	Redknapp	WH	3.3
440	Duberry	CHE	3.0	509	Nolan	SW	1.9	668	Thomas	LIV	3.0	837	Spencer	CHE	2.5	933	Gullit	CHE	4.5
443	Petruscu	CHE	3.0	534	Stefanovic	SW	1.6	669	Giggs	MU	7.4	838	Dublin	COV	4.7	934	Clark	NOT	3.3
444	Phelan	CHE	1.9	535	Méville	SUN	1.2	670	Beckham	MU	5.2	839	Whelan	COV	5.2	935	Robson	MID	5.0
445	Lebeuf	CHE	4.4	536	Kubicki	SUN	2.2	673	Keane	MU	6.5	840	Ndlovu	COV	4.3	936	Reid	SUN	2.0
446	Sinclair	CHE	2.2	537	Ball	SUN	2.7	674	Butt	MU	4.5	843	Gabbiadini	DER	3.5	937	Souness	SOT	2.3
447	Minto	CHE	1.3	538	Campbell	TOT	3.7	675	Sharpe	MU	3.0	844	Ward	DER	2.5	938	O'Neill	LEI	1.8
448	Duish	COV	2.7	539	Calderwood	TOT	2.9	676	Juninho	MID	5.9	845	Sturridge	DER	3.0	939	Smith	DER	2.0
449	Shaw	COV	2.2	540	Austin	TOT	2.2	677	Emerson	MID	4.4	846	Ferguson	EVE	6.7	940	Kinnear	WIM	2.2
450	Burrows	COV	2.2	543	Edinburgh	TOT	1.6	678	Hignett	MID	2.5	847	Amokachi	EVE	3.7	943	Atkinson	COV	4.0
453	Stimac	DER	3.3	544	Mabbutt	TOT	2.7	679	Moore	MID	1.2	848	Rideout	EVE	3.0	944	Little	AV	5.0
454	Powell	DER	1.8	545	Dicks	WH	3.5	680	Lee	NEW	3.6	849	Yeboah	LEE	5.9	945	Pleat	SW	3.5
455	Wassall	DER	2.2	547	Reiper	WH	2.7	683	Batty	NEW	4.5	850	Rush	LEE	5.2				
456	Short	EVE	3.0	548	Hall	WH	2.7	684	Gillespie	NEW	4.0	853	Deane	LEE	3.0				
				549	Bowen	WH	2.2	685	Ginola	NEW	4.2	854	Collymore	LIV	8.1				
				550	Pearce	WIM	2.2	686	Clark	NEW	3.0	855	Fowler	LIV	9.5				

RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. Only one team may be entered in the Independent Fantasy Football competition. The Independent Fantasy Football competition is open to all who are registered with the Independent Fantasy Football competition. The Independent Fantasy Football competition is open to all who are registered with the Independent Fantasy Football competition. The Independent Fantasy Football competition is open to all who are registered with the Independent Fantasy Football competition.

2. The overall prize of the 1997-98 season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

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Our shield against a gun culture

The Conservative majority on the Commons home affairs committee, which does not anyway have a great track record in sophisticated judgement, yesterday produced one of its most perfunctory and inept reports yet. However, the MPs' glib and complacent conclusion brought the gun lobby out in its true colours: the Dunblane parents, we learnt, were a "screaming mob" who are trading in sympathy and working to maintain the moral high ground.

Among all the opinions expressed in this inevitably charged argument, that attempt by shooting enthusiasts to blame the row on the victims of the Dunblane massacre – the slaughter of 16 children and a teacher with legally-held and licensed weapons – was the most contemptible. So much for the dispassionate and rational debate that the gun lobby claims it wants to invoke. The plain truth, as it knows, is that it is fighting the steepest of uphill battles to get public and political opinion on its side.

That is why the Shooters' Rights Association, the trade association for gunsmiths and distributors, has turned to the gimmick – for it can be little more – of threatening to sue the Central Scotland police force for giving Thomas Hamilton a gun licence. The threat allows the association to mount the argument that millions of pounds in gun

sales – and the obligatory "thousands of jobs" – are in danger of being lost.

There is grand talk about a fighting fund. A lobbying campaign has been specifically targeted on Conservative MPs. Attempts have been made to throw doubt on studies tending to show a link between gun ownership and gun homicides. That includes one cited in the Home Office's evidence to the Cullen inquiry, which shows that gun killings in the United States, where the gun culture is entrenched, are more than 50 times higher than in the UK; for those involving handguns the figure is 150 times higher.

The main aim of the lobbying exercise is to obscure the core issue – namely, whether inconvenience for gun enthusiasts and a slimmed-down gun industry is a price worth paying to reduce the chances of further mass murder.

And what of the Tories on the home affairs committee? They have lived up to their growing reputation for either second-guessing what ministers or the establishment or the Conservative Party is likely to want to hear, or for creating a fall-back position for the Government if things get sticky. Not for the first time, there is a suspicion of supposed party loyalty over-riding the duty of impartial analysis. Given the adverse reaction from even some Tory colleagues, they have seriously

misread the political wind. After taking oral evidence on a single day, they not only rejected a total or partial ban on handguns, but also the less draconian compromise that handguns be stored centrally at shooting clubs and that possession of assembled handguns be permitted only at licensed premises. The nub of their reasoning appears to be that, since any proposed restrictions would not stamp out illegal possession of handguns, and since lawful and unlawful access to shotguns or manually loaded rifles would con-

tinue, further controls would have little practical value. They throw in, for good measure, the notion that mass killers would simply resort to other methods, such as bombs, or poison gas. All that is beside the point. No one is suggesting that the possession of illegal guns – invariably the case with firearms used by criminals – is other than a matter for serious concern and action in its own right. That has not prevented successive tightening of gun laws from the earliest controls in the 1824 Vagrancy Act to the 1988

Firearms (Amendment) Act, which, in the wake of the Hungerford massacre of 1987, banned many of the most dangerous weapons, such as self-loading rifles and semi-automatic shotguns. Are the MPs really saying that the 1988 measure was misconceived and unnecessary? The reality is that it did not go far enough.

The goal should be dramatically to reduce the number of guns in private ownership. The outlawing of all handguns except single-shot competition pistols, to be stored at licensed club premises, would go a long way to achieving that, and would not outlaw pistol shooting as a sport for those who want to participate in it. Lord Cullen and the Government should settle for nothing less.

Of course, it would still be possible for criminals to acquire revolvers and use them. No set of controls is ever going to be watertight. But it would make it much harder for a madman to wander off on a shooting spree with a small armory under his jacket.

Handguns are primarily designed to shoot people – they are only incidentally a sporting weapon. If confined to sport, held only under lock and key in properly licensed gun clubs, they will pose little threat to the rest of us; only when kept and traded illegally would they pose a problem. If we wait to stall the development of a gun culture in Britain, then we should ban the pri-

vate, domestic possession of all handguns. It is not only simple – it is also popular, and it will work. It passes all the best tests for effective legislation to cure an obvious social ill. There should be no party political argument – just a straight, across-the-board commitment to get on with it.

Why the Slowgo is a no-no

The Greenpeace Slowgo (originally a Renault Twingo) is an attempt to show how much lighter and cheaper it could be to run a popular European car. By fitting a family car with the size of engine used only by medium-sized go-karts in Britain, the pressure group has doubled its fuel consumption and halved its machismo. This goes against almost everything the British want and expect from their cars. Not only is the engine smaller and more expensive, the creature comforts are 10 years out of date. The windows – imagine! – are wound by hand. No bull bars for sweeping children out of the way. Top speed is only 20mph more than is legal on motorways. Anyone would think it was designed as a means of transport, rather than an expression of the owner's personality and station in life. It will never catch on.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Turn down the glare and save energy

Sir: Karen Bakker ("Light fantastic that will snuff out the stars", 12 August) has rightly drawn attention to the increasing problem of light pollution in the UK. What needs to be said in addition is that this trend runs counter to government policy to cut back on carbon dioxide emissions. It is particularly worrying that the Millennium Commission should be encouraging this development. In case it should be thought that carbon emissions attributable to lighting are of little consequence it should be noted that lighting already accounts for the highest energy cost in the commercial buildings sector.

It is government policy to realise a substantial reduction in energy consumption within its own buildings, though it still has a considerable way to go to achieve its goal. In the light of this policy, should not the Millennium Commission be required to demand evidence of energy saving in all the construction enterprises it supports? As a first step, all bidders should be required to submit projects to the Government's own Energy Design Advice Scheme, funded by the DTI. This would at least ensure that projects met reasonable energy conservation criteria in basic design terms.

Professor PETER F SMITH
Chairman, Environment and Energy Committee
Royal Institute of British Architects
London W1

Sir: You are right to be concerned about light pollution, but I feel you are targeting the wrong causes.

The light flooding the country in your photograph comes from badly designed sports field lighting, over-lit car parks, widespread use of light fittings with poor optical control and (probably most significantly) light reflected from light-coloured road surfaces. These are the real problem, not a few floodlighting schemes like Croydon Skyline.

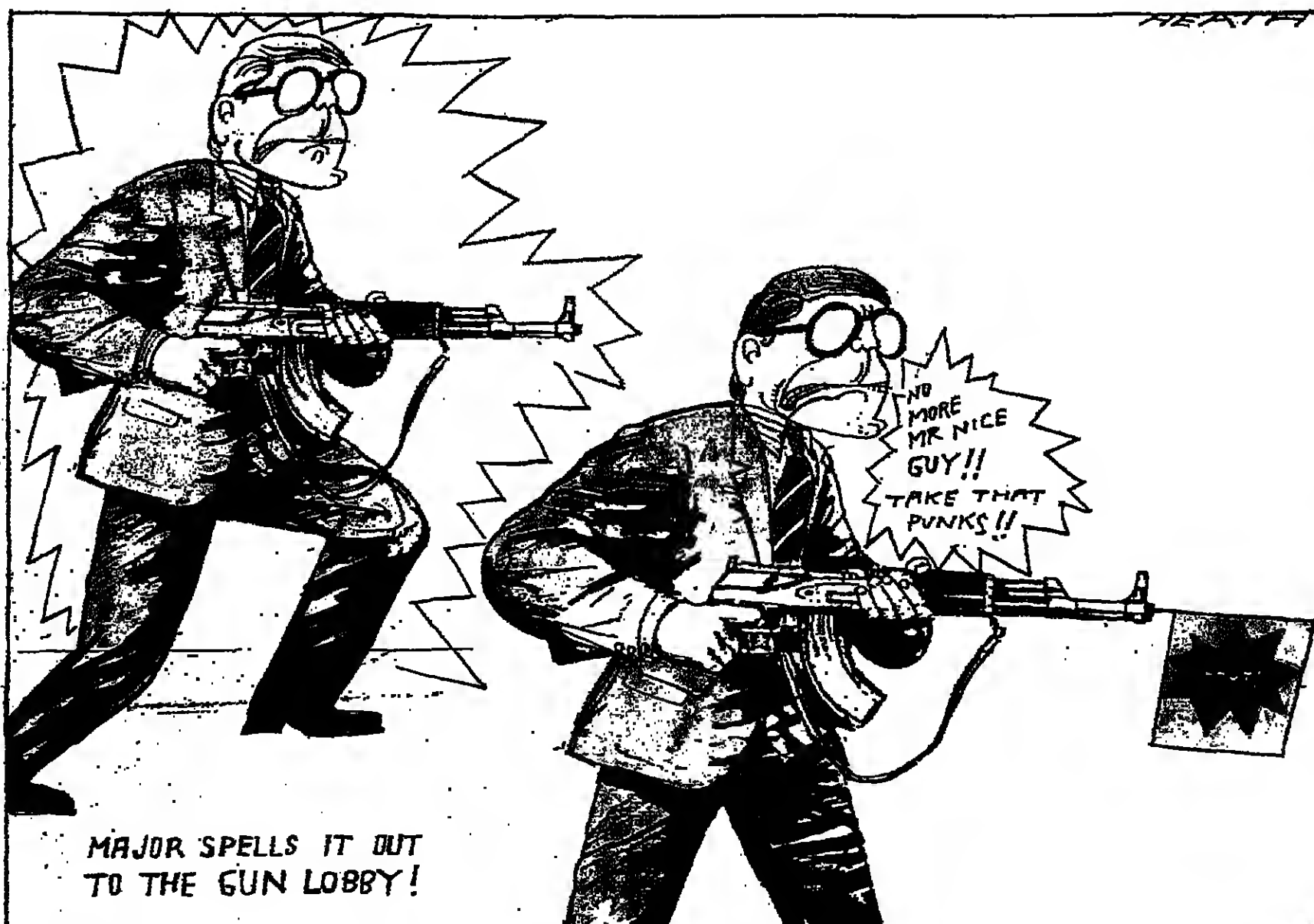
Sensitive floodlighting schemes designed by skilled professionals, using quality lighting equipment, enhance our enjoyment of architecture and have minimal environmental impact. Most of the complaints registered in the Institution of Environmental Health Officers survey cited by Dr Baddiley were about intrusive glare from domestic security lights. Strictly, this is a problem of light trespass, not light pollution.

MARK SAUNDERS
E-mail: mark.saunders@ldms.co.uk

Sir: Your article somewhat misrepresents the thrust of the Croydon Skyline Lighting Project and the environmental benefits that would flow from it.

Croydon Skyline is underpinned by urban lighting strategies with the aim of eliminating light pollution. Croydon is breaking new ground in holistic lighting strategies covering safety, security, energy consumption and light pollution. Skyline is a project with public and economic benefit which will be achieved with minimal environmental cost. We are researching powering Skyline using energy generated from household waste.

We have had discussions with crime prevention officers and the community to establish a priority area for lighting improvements. The council's street lighting programme has the objective of eliminating the legacy of poor quality lighting polluting the night sky by replacing outdated fittings with more energy-



efficient sources that have a downward-only lighting coefficient.

A unique feature of the Skyline Project is that we are seeking the involvement of the Croydon Astronomical Society as a member of the board of trustees controlling the project.

PHILIP GOODWIN
Director of Planning
London Borough of Croydon

Subsidies kill rural jobs

Sir: The European Common Agricultural Policy has had a threefold effect in creating rural unemployment ("The golden harvest is over", 12 August). The subsidies, in being linked to level of production and size of operation, have encouraged increased mechanisation and chemical-based farming – termed "more efficient" because it uses fewer people. The subsidies also led to loss of farms as they became amalgamated into larger ones. In addition, land and therefore labour, was "set aside" in a misguided attempt to reduce the over-production the subsidies promoted.

The social welfare and economic costs on regional and local, rural and urban, levels have been high. Yet we must not assume this trend is inevitable and expect other businesses and industry to fill a few rural labour gaps. Rather, the direction should be towards less intensive, safer and, more locally-based food production systems, encouraged through positive incentives, advice and education. Fiscal measures such as lowering the cost of labour (income tax and National Insurance) and increased

costs of inputs such as energy and chemicals could add to a package of rural employment and environmental benefit.

VICKI HIRD
Sustainable Agriculture Food and Environment Alliance
London SW1

Sir: The introduction of set-aside did indeed supply a much-needed lifeline for wildlife ("Cereals gain as wildlife loses", 12 August). For birds in particular, set-aside provided winter stubble to feed on and nesting cover in the spring. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds believes that the reduction of the area of set-aside for the 96/97 season to just 5 per cent is a serious worry because we expect it to cause the present declines in farmland birds to continue – the skylark population has plummeted by 58 per cent in the last 25 years.

Arable farmers are currently receiving vast amounts of money in subsidies with only 7 per cent being paid to farmers to manage the land for conservation. It is regrettable that during the life of set-aside few steps have been taken to ensure that its environmental benefits are retained for the long term. It is crucial that such action is taken now. The Ministry of Agriculture has recently consulted with conservation organisations and farming representatives on this subject and has asked members of an arable working group to develop ideas for an incentive scheme. It will be vital that these ideas are developed by the Government, with the minimum of delay, into a workable scheme that is adequately

funded and will meet conservation objectives on commercial farms.

GRAHAM WYNNE
Director of Conservation, RSPB
Sandy, Bedfordshire

Reform of student loans

Sir: Your leading article of 9 August on university top-up fees said that it would be a terrible mistake to allow universities to start charging fees. There is no question of them needing to be allowed. Universities are autonomous private sector charities. Thankfully, they are not part of the public sector, but are subject to the tyranny which can accompany a contract from a (near) monopoly purchaser, in this case the state.

In the absence of an improved loans scheme, top-up fees are undesirable. So too, however, is ageing laboratory equipment, under-investment in IT or further increase in student/staff ratios. Any fee scheme will have to take account of ability to pay, be it in advance or post-graduation. A fully fledged graduate tax has the attractions of the Venus fly-trap. Where is the example to show that the Treasury can, long term, keep its sticky fingers off funds raised through the government machine?

I believe the universities and the banks should operate a private loan scheme, with the charges levied allowing for low earners, emigrant graduates, career break losses, etc as well as real rates of interest. Unfortunately, American

experience has shown that it can be more expensive to lend than to give! Thus, the only economic means of recovery is through the Inland Revenue or the Contributions Agency. The new loans company could have a service agreement with either of these to extract repayments from the wage packets of those who had signed up for the loans. In this arrangement the Government is at arm's length and the public sector is not being asked to do anything for which it is not paid.

Professor R F BOUCHER
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
UMIST
Manchester

Policing the police

Sir: John Wadham of Liberty criticised almost everything about the way deaths in police custody are currently examined (Letters, 8 August).

He acknowledged that "the Police Complaints Authority has a role in supervision". However he failed to appreciate that our oversight ensures that a civilian Authority member directs the inquiry and guarantees that an impartial and thorough investigation takes place. Authority members supervise more than 40 inquiries into deaths in custody every year. That gives us considerably more experience of such tragedies than most police officers. I see every completed inquiry and I know that police involvement does not taint them, as Mr Wadham suggested.

It is nonsense to say that only 1 per cent of all complaints lead to charges against officers – criminal charges yes, disciplinary charges no. Last year 4,684 fully investigated cases, including deaths in custody, led to 1,277 formal or informal disciplinary actions.

We have called for disclosure, by the coroner, of evidence to the family of the deceased and are in active discussions with the Coroners' Society. In addition we are seeking ways of preventing such tragedies happening. That is why we participated in the Lambeth working group which produced the *Lessons from Tragedies* report and why we are now working on a study of deaths in custody with the Police Surgeons Association.

PETER MOORHOUSE
Acting Chairman
Police Complaints Authority
London SW1

Nyet

Sir: I recently sought permission to employ an au pair girl from Russia but I have learnt from the immigration and nationality directorate of the Home Office that Russia is not included in the list of countries whose nationals may enter the UK as au pairs, and that there are no plans to extend the scheme.

This surprised me, particularly as nationals of countries such as Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Turkey may come. Why is Russia excluded? This seems a very short-sighted policy because it is to everyone's advantage that Britain has ties of friendship with Russia.

PAMELA PERRIN
Baldock, Hertfordshire

Tories conjure up the demon Blair

Sir: You are much too kind to the Tory Central Office in your editorial of 13 August.

Caricaturing the personalities of your opponents and exploiting their weaknesses is part of the game. But this latest campaign against Tony Blair sets new standards of squalor and irrationalism in recent public life. The demonisation, the attempt to stir up a kind of voodoo atmosphere, might be saved if there was even a trace of humour or caricature. But there isn't. This looks a dead serious, vicious assault. Not a pretty sight.

JONATHAN GREEN
Manchester

Sir: Jung believed that a group could project its own shadow – the unacknowledged side of its own experience – on to another person or organisation. As a result it would see and reject in others what it failed to see and accept in itself. By demonising Tony Blair the Conservatives have inadvertently told us more about themselves than they have about the Labour Party.

FR PAT COLLINS
Dublin

Sir: When John Smith so tragically died John Major spoke passionately about the integrity of the man and the need to remove personal attacks from politics. In view of the latest poster campaign by Conservative Central Office, I wonder how he would feel, and what he would say, if Tony Blair were to suffer in the same way.

IS DRUMMOND
Leeds

Sir: The Fabians have certainly lived up to their namesake's delaying tactics in waiting till now to recommend for Britain what was done for Japan half a century ago ("Labour disowns Fabian attack on the Queen", 12 August). That doughty right-winger General Douglas MacArthur, as Allied supreme commander in occupied Japan, presided over a dramatic reduction in the staff of the imperial household (more than 7,000 retainers lost their jobs) while the Emperor's daughters ceased to be princesses and the Japanese peccage was abolished under the constitution of 1947.

One result is that the future of the Chrysanthemum Throne is today a lot more secure than it is that of the House of Windsor.

PETER MARTIN
E-mail: p.martin@netcom.co.uk

Muslim empire

Sir: Muslim expansion into southern Europe (Letter, 10 August) took place in a world organised into rival empires: it was a question of occupy or be occupied. Comparing the treatment of Christians and Jews under Muslim control, where they lived as protected "People of the Book", with that of Muslims and Jews in the Christian states, when they were allowed to live there at all, it is clear that expansion was the only safe course open to Muslims.

In contrast, the denial of self-determination to the Palestinians since 1918 has taken place in a world that is supposed to be organised into self-determining nation states.

P J STEWART
Oxford

analysis

The green, white and orange tiger

Wake up, there's an economic miracle on our doorstep. Ireland is outpacing the world, writes John Lichfield

Scene: St Stephen's Green, central Dublin last week. First Taxi Driver to Second Taxi Driver: "Sure, I didn't recognise you, now, in a f...ing Volvo".

Quoting taxi drivers as a guide to a nation's economy – or politics, or anything else – is an ancient and dishonourable newspaper tradition. For once it is justified. The reversal of fortune in the Dublin taxi business (once celebrated for the shabbiness of its cars and the gloominess of its drivers) is startling. A few years ago drivers were giving away their trade plates; now they change hands for up to £75,000. (That is Irish pounds, which are currently worth more than sterling.)

The Republic of Ireland, in case you had missed it, is booming. Ireland's growth rate last year (7.3 per cent) was, for the third year in a row, the highest in the western world. The Irish economy is expected to grow by another 5 or 6 per cent this year. Inflation is the lowest in Europe (2.5 per cent). Nearly one third of all US high-tech investment in Europe goes into the Republic. Ireland has more young people with scientific and engineering degrees than any country, save Japan. Tourist spending in Ireland was 15 per cent up last year; 10 per cent up again this year. There is net emigration into Ireland for the first time since the Potato Famine of the 1840s (apart from a brief spurt in the 1970s).

Ireland is not only booming economically; it has become culturally fashionable. The hill of Killiney to the south of Dublin has so many movie and sports stars in residence that it has been nicknamed Bel Air by the *Dublin Evening Herald*. The latest would-be part-time Dubliners are Marion Brando and Steffi Graf.

What were the off-the-peg images of Ireland 20 years ago; even 10 years ago? The interminable, mournful troubles in the North; church-enforced social paralysis in the South; rain; Val Doonican; mass emigration; revolving-door coalition governments; more rain; a begonia bowl in Brussels.

Fast-forward to 1996 and the images that sum up Ireland are: a successful soccer team; hopes for peace, now tarnished; a Nobel Prize for Seamus Heaney; the Commitments the Booker Prize for Roddy Doyle; U2; Bob Geldof; endless wins in the Eurovision song contest; the runaway success of Riverdance; more success in the Olympics than Britain; a run of good summers; that nice President Mary Robinson.

It is common (especially in Northern Ireland) to denigrate



Striding ahead: Ireland's economy is compared with those of the Pacific Rim, but it has done better than Singapore, Korea or Malaysia in the past five years

Photograph: Photocall

Ireland's success as a sham boom, jacked up by EU subsidies and mercenary foreign companies who are allowed to repatriate most of their profits. Both accusations have a grain of truth but fail to explain the magnitude of what is happening across the Irish Sea.

EU farm and regional subsidies give Ireland about £2bn a year – 4 per cent of GNP. The direct EU investments in Irish roads, ports and airports (worth about £1bn a year) are a godsend. But, overall, according to the former Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald, EU subsidies are responsible for only half a percentage point of Irish annual growth. Jerry Baker, a British economist at the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin, says: "The EU money is important but the psychological impact of joining Europe was much more important. We got out from under

Britain; we became a country in our own right, in a sense for the first time."

Ireland is sometimes compared with the Tiger economies of the Pacific Rim; but Ireland (on the Atlantic rim) has done better than Singapore or Korea or Malaysia in the past five years. It has combined Asian growth with European rates of inflation. Add an entry ticket to the Single European Market of 350 million people and you have a perfect invitation to international investment.

It is true that the Irish government gilds the invitation by taking only 10 per cent of the profit of foreign firms. Over £2bn in corporate profits were exported from Ireland last year (mostly to the US). But it is not true – no longer true anyway – to describe the imported jobs as low skilled. Increasingly, the work coming to Ire-

land is high-quality, highly paid, at the cutting edge of advance in information technology or pharmaceuticals.

At worst, this amounts to a kind of static emigration. Young Irish men and women are still working for foreigners, but at least they are remaining in Ireland while they do so. Many are returning, with skills and money, from abroad.

At best, Ireland is building an infrastructure in the second industrial revolution which – partly through deliberate British policy – it never had in the first. Until the 1960s, almost all industrial capacity in the island of Ireland was in the North; now three quarters of it is in the South.

There remain serious blots on the landscape; particularly the rate of unemployment, still one of the highest in Europe at 12.7 per cent. The jobless – especially the long-term jobless – are concentrated in urban and inner-suburban ghettos, especially in Dublin, which have some of the worst social, drug and crime problems in the EU. There are large pockets of rural deprivation, worst in the counties close to the border. Otherwise, the boom is reasonably spread around the country. Galway, a sleepy and moribund, almost forgotten, town 20 years ago, can now barely cope with its tourist and local trade; it claims to be the fastest growing city in the EU.

In a sense, both the social and economic Irish revolutions are youth-led. Garret Fitzgerald says the great secret of the country's success is the bountiful supply of well-educated young people, produced by an education system which (partly thanks to contributions by the church) costs less per pupil than Britain's. "Education is the key to everything," he said in an interview at his home last week. "It is a lesson that you in Britain should learn. Or I should say in England and Wales. Scotland is much more like us. Your completion rate in secondary education and take-up rate in third-level education are disastrously

low." Almost half of all Irish youngsters go to college or university, compared to just under 30 per cent in Britain.

Here lurks a great, historical irony. Education is successful in Ireland partly because it has a large, aspirational rural population, used to having to travel and learn and hustle for work. Thanks to repressive British policies in times past (denying Catholic Ireland heavy industry), the Republic does not have a large, inflexible, unenterprising, anti-education, urban working class. The urban working class that does exist in inner-city Dublin and a few other towns is noticeably exempt from the educational, and economic, boom.

Why did 3Com pick Ireland? "A bright, willing, flexible, well-educated labour force is crucial," says Mr Connell. "The reason we can compete with the Far East, with higher unit labour costs, is because we are always pushing out the boundaries of our production methods to make them cheaper and better. To do that you need people with good language skills, who can grasp new concepts, who are not fixed on old ways of doing things."

Mr Connell is general manager of the operation of 3Com, a Californian company,

to see the new Ireland, turn off the new M50 motorway which bypasses Dublin to the west; continue along the dual-carriageway; turn off onto a country lane; pass two encampments of travellers drying their laundry on the hedgerows; (some things never change); pass through the security gates; enter an industrial park with airport terminal architecture and manicured lawns and fountains. You could be in New Jersey.

Donal Connell is general manager of the operation of 3Com, a Californian company,

Few Irish people will admit it, but credit is also due (wait for it) to Irish politicians. Ireland had rapid growth in the 1960s but it was thrown away by the profligate spending of Fianna Fail governments in the 1970s, which created severe stagflation (simultaneous recession and inflation). It was Dr Fitzgerald, as leader-of-Fine Gael, who began the fight-back from 1982, but he admits that subsequent Fianna Fail-led coalitions – especially Finance Minister, and later European Commissioner, Ray MacSharry – share the credit for putting Ireland's house in order.

An extraordinary consensus on economic policy has existed in Dublin for 15 years, embracing whatever parties happen to be in coalition, from the centre-right to the ex-Stalinist left. There have been spending cuts more savage than anything attempted by Mrs Thatcher or Ronald Reagan; there have been substantial personal tax cuts; there has been the world's only successful wage-restraint policy; there has been a stringent monetary policy, in effect, sub-contracted to the Bundesbank through the European Monetary System. This adds up to a uniquely Irish mixture of right-wing (free market) and left-wing (interventionist) policies; but it has worked.

The boom has produced something newish for Ireland – the conspicuous flaunting of wealth. More Mercedes were sold in Ireland in the first six months of this year than in any

previous year. Dublin (deprived areas apart) is humming, and changing. It is also becoming more European, in ways that can be disturbing, if you loved the old Dublin. The traditional culture of dank pubs, soaked in Guinness and wit, is giving way to a café culture of bright lights, rock music and chatter. The old Dublin still exists in parallel, but patronised by brown signs advertising a "literary pub tour". If Leopold Bloom lived at this hour, he would be a bond trader at the Dublin international financial services centre. Instead of eating "the inner organs of beasts and fowls", he would spend his lunch hour, with a mobile phone clamped to his ear, eating Acapulco prawns in the Bad Ass Café.

Some fear that Ireland is becoming too European; others that it is becoming too American. And yet tourists – often older and richer tourists than before – are pouring in because of the global fashion for things Irish.

David Quinn, 27, founder and artistic director of the Punchbowl Theatre on the quayside in Galway city, says he has no fears of Irish loss of identity. There is, if anything, a revival of interest among young people in Irish culture. The fact that Ireland has joined the modern world, he says, has made young people more proud of being Irish, not less.

"When I was growing up there were no modern Irish heroes. Our heroes were all foreigners. Now we have our own heroes... Seamus Heaney, U2, Michelle Smith. We are the first liberal generation, the first free-born generation if you like, in the sense that we no longer measure everything by what Britain does and we don't live in fear of what the Catholic Church says... We have grown up. We have become a modern nation."

What of the future? Demography, among other things, is on Ireland's side. The birth rate has halved in the past decade. Five or 10 years from now, Ireland could be really booming: it will have a relatively small elderly population; a large well-educated working population; fewer people coming into the workforce and therefore – in theory – dramatically lower unemployment.

European Monetary Union, which Ireland seems certain to join, should provide more economic impetus, according to a recent study (but 'should' cause competitive problems for Ireland and Britain does not join and sterling devalues). EU subsidies will (and should) decline as poorer members join and Ireland becomes more prosperous. But foreign investors are as eager as ever; Ireland is already cherry-picking the best. If present growth trends continue, Ireland will have a higher GNP per head than Britain in 15 or 20 years.

There is no reason why Britain should begrudge Ireland's success. Our neighbour remains one of our best and biggest markets; a booming Republic could yet be part of a complex, chemical formula for historical and generational change that might, in time, solve the Irish question. It is time to dump all the old pre-conceptions about Ireland. You may not have noticed but we have a green, white and orange striped tiger living next door.

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You can make mine a Renault McGann

It is with great pleasure that I welcome back Dr Wordsmith, our irregular expert on the meanings and derivations of words.

Dr Wordsmith spent three years at university studying the meanings and derivations of words, and thus left university completely unemployable – or would have done, had it not been for the new fashion for interest in semantics and philology, or at least the current fashion for having columns about words in newspapers. When that fashion passes on, Dr Wordsmith will again be unemployable. Till then we are always guardedly glad to welcome him, to give him a chance to answer your questions about language. All yours, doc!

I have sometimes seen the word "bistro" spell "bistrot" and sometimes seen it spell "bistrot". Is it correct to have the "t" on the end of the word or not?

Dr Wordsmith writes: The French spell it with a "t" on the end, but the English have dropped the "t" in their version of the word. The correctness of the spelling depends

on your nationality. In France, for instance, there is a new car called a Renault Mégane. In Ireland, I believe, it is being marketed as a Renault McGann. Same with "bistro" and "bistrot".

But they mean the same in both languages, don't they?

Dr Wordsmith writes: No. In France a "bistrot" is an unpretentious little restaurant with shabby décor and dog-eared menus where you can get superb food, whereas in England a "bistro" is a pretentious little restaurant with superb menus and décor where you can get...

Yes, I think we get the point. But I have noticed another variation in spelling. Sometimes the word "turbo" is spelled without a "t", and sometimes it is spelled with a "t", as in "turbot". Is there any difference in meaning?

Dr Wordsmith writes: Not really. "Turbot" with a "t" is a word added to restaurant menus to make them seem impressive, and "turbo" without a "t" is a word added to the backs of cars to make them seem impressive.

Is the "t" on the end of



Miles Kingston

these words ever pronounced?

Dr Wordsmith writes: Not in the case of words like "tarot" and "Merlot" and "Renault", except in ignorance. The "t" on the end of "gigot" is pronounced in France, but not in Scotland. The "t" on the end of "Camelot" is not pronounced in England, but in France it is pronounced on the end of the equivalent word.

What does the equivalent to Camelot mean in French?

Dr Wordsmith writes: A load of over-priced, meretricious rubbish, as it does in England. I have noticed that the word "gro" is sometimes spelled "gro" and sometimes spelled "gro". What is the difference?

Dr Wordsmith writes: They both mean the same thing, i.e. things going round and round in a circle, usually money. The original word was "gyro", which was an acronym for "Get Your Revenue Organised", but for some reason this was changed to another acronym, "General Inland Revenue Organisation", or "gyro", and this is the one that has stuck.

Where does the actual word acronym come from? I know it means a set of initial letters making a new name, but I don't know the derivation.

Dr Wordsmith writes: Oddly enough, it is itself an acronym. The letters ACRONYM stand for "Adaptable Code for Recalling or Naming Your Message".

Shouldn't that be ACRONYM? You've missed out the word "for" in the initials.

Dr Wordsmith writes: Don't get clever with me, fish face. Do you call the United States of America the USOA?

No. Dr Wordsmith writes: Well, then. Anyway, these acronyms are only a kind of a mnemonic, really.

Where does the word "mnemonic" come from?

Dr Wordsmith writes: Blimey. Well, oddly enough, it comes from another acronym. It stands for MNEMONIC – My New Easy Method of Memorising Intricate Codes.

"My new easy method? Who does 'my' refer to?"

Dr Wordsmith writes: Well, presumably that refers to the inventor of the new easy method.

And who was he?

Dr Wordsmith writes: I haven't the faintest idea. But whoever he was, he could not spell very well, considering that he put an "n" on the front of "memorising".

In Australia, a "barbecue" is known as a "barbie". Does this mean that in Australia a Barbie Doll is a little man wearing a bloodstained apron holding a steak on a fork?

Dr Wordsmith writes: Look, I see the pubs have just opened and I'm dying for a drink. Some other time, perhaps?

Dr Wordsmith will be back soon. Keep those queries rolling in!

سكدا من الامم

the commentators

Only a spoilsport could scorn cultural circuses

Let's count our blessings. Robert Winder celebrates summer arts festivals, near and far

George Steiner must have wondered, as he tucked into his morning porridge in Edinburgh yesterday, whether he was dreaming. The papers were busy telling everyone how he had just given the festival a disdainful dressing-down in his inaugural Edinburgh University Festival lecture: "Why the festival is too big for its boots," they exclaimed. "Time to bury the cultural relics."

Steiner had, it appeared, accused the annual festa of failing to live up to its exalted aims, suggesting that it was hithered in its reluctance to embrace the vivid, purposeful aesthetic of modern science. He had even, apparently, urged the festival to quit while it was ahead.

In the long history of media misrepresentation this is of course an innocuous and trivial case, but it is worth mentioning that these were not remotely the themes of Steiner's long and interesting speech. They were merely a teasing (and, if anything, constructive) coda in a sustained tribute to the excellence of

Edinburgh's engagement with the cosmopolitan artistic life of Europe. One headline even credited the professor with saying that Edinburgh "has outlived its spirit, aims and ideals" - a notably unSteinerian cliché that does not, as it happens, appear in the lecture at all. He did say that the vision of European fellowship (or "communism") which inspired the festival in its early, post-war days "has not been realised", but this was a criticism of western Europe's continuing love-affair with sectarian fending, hardly a comment on a Scottish arts carnival.

In fact, it would be possible to have some sympathy even for the distorted version of Steiner's views. The Edinburgh festival sometimes seems too wacky by half. You can't turn a corner near the Grass Market these days without bumping into someone dressed as a tomato, handing you a playbill for tonight's explosive satire-cum-farce. But even

if the fringe has flopped down far over the eyes, only a spoilsport could seriously object: it is only fun, after all. Indeed, this exuberance is a big part of what makes any festival popular and successful: the creation of an exhilarating, creative, lots-going-on atmosphere in the city as a whole.

Still, the serious question discussed in Steiner's lecture - "What are festivals for?" - is a good one. Certainly we are in the middle of a large and sustained festival-boom. The British Council's guide to arts festivals counts 71 events in the calendar year: everything from the sizeable international gatherings at Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Hay-on-Wye and Cheltenham to the more modest get-togethers in Aberystwyth, Richmond-upon-Thames and Bracknell. Culture values with time on their hands can gear up for Edinburgh by checking out the scene in Harrogate and King's Lynn, and then while away

the rest of the summer going to readings, plays and write-ins at Rye, Dartington, Ilkley, Sheffield, Cleveland, Wells, Lancaster, Guildford, Canterbury and Hastings.

And this is just in Britain; the rest of Europe is just as busy. You can jet off on lovely musical holidays in

Festivals cannot be bourgeois museums. They must be places to experiment

Bayreuth or Salzburg, with time to climb an Alp before the string quartets or attend stirring operatic weekends in Verona and heady jazz nights in Nice. One might have thought that the escalation of media consumption in recent decades -

video, satellite, cable and so on - would have turned us all into stay-at-homes, diminishing the appetite for a personal brush with the real thing. The opposite seems to be true. These days there are simply more coat-tails the public wishes to touch.

It is hard to see a danger to civilisation in any of this. For one thing, it goes back a long way: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were all products of the great drama competitions of ancient Greece. We moderns no longer believe that art is competitive, though gold medals for art, architecture, music and literature were included in the Olympic Games until 1948. But the idea of culture as sport (rather than as education, or morality, or duty) is attractive. These things are supposed to be enjoyable; they are above all social occasions. There is a touch of despotism about arts festivals. Tyrants love them - it shows how sensitive they are. But there is

also a genuine democratic impulse, the same urge that drives people on to streets in Rio de Janeiro or Notting Hill Gate. Edinburgh appears to marry these two elements as well as anywhere - better by far than Salzburg, for instance, where only lottery winners can afford tickets, and bow ties seem to be compulsory even in the ice-cream kiosks.

There is one risk, however, which Steiner forcefully underlined. Festivals cannot merely be bourgeois museums; they need to be forums for promoting new or difficult work, places to experiment - arts laboratories, as it were. One of the biggest blights on English culture was the association forged by the Bloomsbury group between the high arts and country house living. The baleful idea that a taste for fine art is pretty much the same as a taste for fine wine and elegant furniture (ie, a luxury) has cast a long shadow which continues to dim the view. If

festival-mad Britain goes down this heritage-industry route, serving up inoffensive entertainments in the gap between a cream tea and dinner in the Duke's library, then it will not be a heartening trend.

But this does not seem to be happening. Indeed, the touching aspect of most festivals is that they began as private obsessions, and continue to feel driven by innocent enthusiasm. A month ago, for instance, in Bantry, Co Cork, a new one was created. A dairy-farming music lover persuaded the Vanbrugh Quartet to perform in one of his cowsheds for a week. Scamus Heaney dropped in and read some poems. The audience went away dazed and happy. Next year, who knows, they may have to use the hayloft as well, and before we know it they will be performing in a muddy marquee out by the silage. It will be many years before the three tenors descend on Bantry and distinguished professors are mistakenly supposed to be shaking their heads and saying that it is not what it used to be.

The Devil still has the best tune

These days we fear Old Nick more than God. That's why demon Blair packs a punch, says Sara Maitland

It is a curious fact that when God had a stronger hold on public consciousness than He does today, people were less inclined to be worried about the Devil. The Bishop of Oxford says that the Conservative Party's poster campaign showing Tony Blair with devilishly slanted eyes is dangerous. The bishop may only have meant to say that it was dangerous to democracy for the body politic to demonise the legitimate opposition; or to introduce that level of personal abuse into electioneering; but he went further; it was dangerous because it "draws on satanic imagery".

Satanic imagery is a bit more complicated, actually, than a pair of red eyes behind a mask that might be the Lone Ranger's, and which are drawn more from B-grade horror movies than any European Christian tradition. But if the Conservative publicity machine is really trying to draw parallels between Blair and the original Devil, it should be careful.

By the end of the Middle Ages, there were three things that everyone knew about the Devil (apart from the fact that he was bad). The first, which is obviously implied in the advert, is that he was the consummate liar and deceiver. But the others were that the Devil was enormously powerful and enormously sexy. Blair certainly wants to be the former, and probably wants to be thought the latter: it is surprising that the Tory party should so readily hand him such an accolade.

If the image is going to demonise Mr Blair, it will work

as much around our subliminal expectations of Satan as around anything specific about the Labour Party, old or new. We can learn about what these might be by looking at the history of Christian iconography. Democling the opposition has long been a part of the political job. During the Reformation, pro-Catholic propaganda pictures of Luther frequently showed him either as the Devil or with the Devil sitting affectionately on his shoulder and whispering inspiration into his ear. The reformers responded with vicious caricatures of the

We are obsessed by evil without any counterbalancing sense of good triumphing

personified Papal Bull, who is shown in 16th-century prints sitting at a table with a revoltingly obese Pope; the Bull's horns and tail were far more explicitly demonic than the red eyes and sinister mask that the Tories have painted on Mr Blair.

The Devil was strong and subtle. He started out as a mere snake but quickly took on all the powers of the dragon, breathing fire and wreaking havoc. As well as having immense physical strength, he also apparently had great mental powers as well. He could dispute with the greatest theologian. He was the master of disguise - dressing up as someone else being the very core of "lying", and one of the reasons why cross-dressing was more or less proof of heresy, as Joan of Arc discovered.

The Devil was sexy: he estab-

lished his bond with witches by seducing them. The very word "glamour" derives from the spell that, under his auspices, witches performed: to "cast a glamour" was their crime. The word eventually extended to the alluring but deceptive beauty that the witches gained from their association with the Devil. Because people knew all this about him, they were far less worried by evil than we seem to be. If you believed in Satan you also believed in a God who had overcome Satan - and there were therefore simple ways of dealing with him. Quite simply,

the Devil was terrified of Jesus, so you had only to name Christ or make the sign of the cross and the Devil would be forced to flee. (A good test, this. Make the sign of the cross when you next see Tony Blair on the TV, and if he explodes in a puff of vile smoke you should vote Tory next time. If he does not, you can safely follow your normal method of political discernment.)

The important thing in the Middle Ages was to keep the Devil in proportion. Hell was a real threat, and should not be ignored, but to let the Devil terrify you was equally reprehensible. In Christ there was nothing to fear - the Devil could be laughed at. Teresa of Avila recalls that when her visions began, she consulted a confessor about how the would know whether they were from God or Satan. He instructed her to

greet their onset with a lewd gesture. If they were divine, her humility (in not assuming the visions were sent by God) would be pleasing to the Lord, and if they were from the Devil he would flee because the Devil, being unsexually proud, cannot bear to be laughed at.

In the light of the victory of Christ, the argument went, the Devil should be mocked. The little red devils with horns, goats' feet and tails, familiar from medieval paintings, were a product of this attitude. When the Devil appeared in art there was often an element of farce.

In the Mary of Nijmegen mystery play, for example, Satan confesses that all the devils are slightly deformed: "It is not in our power, we devils from hell/to incarnate ourselves... without some little defect here or there/Be it in the head or the hands or the feet." Look at Hieronymus Bosch images to see the devil portrayed in innumerable playful forms.

What is frightening now is that we seem obsessed by evil without any counterbalancing sense of a triumph of good, or even any decent myth resources. We say we don't believe in the Devil, but popular culture is full of images that depend on his power: horror movies, invasive aliens, invisible diseases, ritual abuse, the overwhelming "evil" of a Hamilton or a West - a devil too powerful for us to ward off with simple charms, too amorphous for us to visualise, and too scary for us either to admit we are scared of or to laugh at.

What is worrying is that the creators of this new poster are aware enough of these lurking fears to try to exploit them. It



Hieronymus Bosch's hell: in the Middle Ages it was far easier to mock the Devil

is precisely to the point that there should be no actual, measurable or examinable message in these advertisements: they just say, "be frightened".

It must be quite hard for the other political parties to respond to this particular campaign. Either to ignore it altogether, or to join in, carries very real risks.

ELEGANT. BEAUTIFUL. PROUD. SOON SHE COULD BE DEAD FROM HUNGER.



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THE CENTRAL FACTS FROM THE COURSES YOU ALWAYS MEANT TO TAKE. IN 25 LECTURES

Tragedy was supposedly invented by the Greek playwright Thespis, but the word literally means "goat song", and tragedy has been derived from animal sacrifice, funeral lament, hero cult, ancestor worship, initiation rites, and fertility dances respectively.

Yet tragedies were originally performed at Athenian festivals of the wine-god Dionysus, and their forebear is most likely to have been Dionysus's danced hymn, the "dithyramb". For Greek tragedy required chorus and actors to sing: indeed, Monteverdi and his colleagues in the Italian renaissance came to believe it to have been entirely musical, and in imitating it accidentally invented opera.

The earliest surviving tragedy is Aeschylus's *Persians* (472 BC), though more people are familiar with his *Oresteia*. The second great tragedian was Sophocles, who in plays such as *Oedipus Tyrannus* created what we understand as the individual "tragic hero". Next came Euripides, with his shocking female leads, such as Medea. All three were imitated by the Romans, but the only surviving Latin tragedies are those of Seneca (tragedy is AD). Senecan tragedy is imbued with Stoic philosophy's conflict between passion and reason, obsessed with

the supernatural, and bloodier than its Greek precursors. It fundamentally influenced renaissance neoclassical tragedy, which emulated its five-act structure, figured rhetoric and fascination with revenge.

Everyone's popular conception of tragedy derives ultimately from Aristotle's *Poetics*. Plato had banned tragedy from his ideal Republic on the ground that it encouraged transvestism and unmanly weeping: his pupil Aristotle responded by maintaining that it elicited the emotions of pity and fear in a constructive process involving catharsis.

Tragedy is conventionally set in the past. The Italians and French embraced myth, which Saetre called "serious theatre's true battleground". But English tragedians always preferred (allegedly) authentic historical figures: Ben Jonson thought that the "truth of argument" of his *Sejanus* enhanced its emotional impact. Death is central to tragedy: thus the play-within-a-play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is "tragical... for Piramus therein doth kill himself".

Superior tragedies contemplate the conflict between autonomous human action and forces beyond human control, whether conceived as the decrees of the Delphic oracle, or as Gloucester's famous



WEEK 2 DAY 3
Tragedy

VISITING LECTURER: Edith Hall

A final examination will be set at the end of term. All graduates will be awarded a diploma and the ten best results will receive a year's subscription to the Independent



gods in *King Lear*, killing humans as wanton boys kill flies for their sport. George Steiner argued in *The Death of Tragedy* that the form is defunct precisely because the dominant thought systems of the 20th-century West, Marxism and Christianity, cannot accommodate the old Hellenic notions of blind fate or unjust gods.

Chaucer defined a tragedy as a story "of hym that stood in greet prosperitee/And is yfallen out of heigh degree/Into myserie, and endeth wrecchidly": the heroes in tragedy, classically conceived, must be of "heigh degree".

There was long a genre distinction between "aristocratic" tragic heroes and comedy's plebeian characters. Tragedy proper thus ended with the ancient regime in 1789: the French revolutionary dramatist Beaumarchais (who composed the libretto for Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*), wrote that tragedy must henceforward focus on people of "ordinary degree" rather than kings.

Many subsequent serious dramas about "ordinary" people can arguably be called "tragedies" (Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, Pinter's *The Caretaker*, Synge's *Riders to the Sea*). Arthur Miller thinks that true tragedy lies in the kinds of questions a writer asks rather than in a specific form, and has

himself a claim to the title of "20th-century tragedian". In his *Death of a Salesman*, the lowly Willy Loman, brought ineluctably into conflict with the expectations of a restrictive society, approaches the heroic stature of the Sophoclean Oedipus.

Even Chaucer's view that the tragic hero is "yfallen" and "endeth wrecchidly" is traceable to Aristotle: for him the best tragic plot featured a successful individual making a mistake (*hamartia*, eg marrying your mother), leading to a reversal of fortune. This need for a "wretched ending" explains why tragedy is dead in today's cinemas, our equivalent of the Athenian theatre of Dionysus.

Unhappy endings are uncommercial, as Robert Altman so acerbically observed in his satire on the film industry, *The Player*. The film-within-the-film was to have ended with Julia Roberts executed in the gas chamber, but commercial pressures forced the substitution of her rescue by that unlikely *deus ex machina*, Bruce Willis. Perhaps our modern consciousness is so overwhelmed by the real human tragedies relayed by the media that it can no longer tolerate downbeat closure in its recreational fictions.

Tomorrow, Comedy

McGann

obituaries / gazette

Sir Anthony Parsons

Anthony Parsons was one of the most invigorating characters in British public life.

When I met him first, in the late 1950s, he was a junior attaché in the British Embassy at Ankara, and I admired his familiarity with the Turkish political scene as much as I enjoyed his company and that of his wife, Sheila. In subsequent years, when he was a rising diplomat, our paths crossed frequently in various Arab countries and I used to think that he would have been a great success in my own profession of journalism. With his quick intelligence, his command of Arabic, Turkish and Persian, and his individualistic approach to life, I thought him much more suitable material for a foreign correspondent than for a diplomat. Indeed, I thought in those days that it was not so much a question of whether he would get to the top in the Foreign Office as whether he would last the course at all.

Not for lack of ability, you understand. Soon after winning a Military Cross as an artillery officer during the Second World War, he was given the opportunity to read Oriental Languages at Oxford as an apprenticeship to a career in the diplomatic service and emerged, from Balliol, with First Class honours. But the question mark would have been over his willingness to stay in line when he found himself required to accept and to implement policies whose wisdom he doubted; and there were indeed to be occasions during his 40-odd years as a public servant when his loyalty was severely tested. The Suez crisis in 1956 was one, and for Anthony Parsons there was another near thing in 1967 when his masters in Whitehall dithered over the question of whether or not to abandon Britain's imperial role in the Persian Gulf.

That he survived these and other moments of less acute tension was due to a personality which combined a number of disparate, even contradictory, characteristics but which had at its core an unshakeable integrity. He would have balked at that phrase, for of all things he hated any suggestion of pomposity, and the assurance with which he pursued his public career was tempered always with informality and a sense of humour which could make fun of his own necessary posturing, for instance as Britain's representative at the United Nations. And when he misjudged events, as he frankly admitted he had done in Iran during the months which led up to the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, he was the first to say so, omitting to mention that everyone else had made the same mistake — except, he would add with a smile, his wife.

It was above all that sense of



Parsons, centre, voting at the United Nations Security Council with his colleagues Oleg Trianovsky (Soviet Union, left) and Charles Lichenstein (United States), 1982

Photograph: Popperfoto/UP

humour, masking as it did as grasp of affairs which was very seldom at fault, which carried him to the top; that and an ability to win the trust even of those who disagreed with him. With Arabs, among whom he spent the greater part of his professional life, this combination of frankness and an always imminent sense of humour brought instant success. In Egypt, in Sudan, in Bahrain and the smaller Gulf sheikhdoms, there were many occasions when angry diatribes against the sins of British imperialism ended in gusts of laughter as each side acknowledged its own pretensions.

Nor was it only Arabs whom Anthony Parsons was able to disarm in this way. His opposite number at the UN during the presidency of Ronald Reagan was Jeanne Kirkpatrick, an ideologue of the far right whose outlook could scarcely have been further removed from his own; but she was seduced (if such a word can be applied to 60 ineluctable an opponent) by the Parsons technique of forthright but always genial argument. The way he tackled what looked at first like an impossible task in the early days of the crisis over Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands drew from Kirkpatrick a reluctant tribute to the enduring skills of British diplomacy as demon-

strated by Sir Anthony at his crowning moment of his career.

It was indeed an outstanding success. In the face of hesitancy from the Americans and downright hostility from some of the other members of the Security Council, Parsons managed to muster the 10 essential votes for a mandatory resolution condemning the Argentine action and so opening the way for Margaret Thatcher's government to embark on its ultimately successful counter-action. No doubt it was this, among other things, that persuaded Thatcher, when Parsons retired from the Foreign Office not long afterwards, to enlist him as her personal adviser on foreign affairs. He accepted the appointment, after some hesitation and on a part-time basis, anxious not to find himself at odds with his diplomatic colleagues. All was well, and the other members of the Prime Minister's staff marvelled at the way she accepted from Parsons interruption and even criticism which, coming from anyone else, would have been brusquely overruled.

After that, at the age of 62 and with time at last to indulge his fancies, his inclination leaned towards the academic life. He often said that given the choice he would have liked to read English Literature at university, and he would have made

a stimulating tutor. As it was, he had acquired in the spare moments of an active career a familiarity with the works of everyone from Beowulf to P.G. Wodehouse, with Conrad as a particular and suggestive favourite. It was (or so I sensed) the romantic in him that embraced Conrad, as well as the conviction, grounded in experience, that success is there to be grasped but is only a hair's-breadth away from failure; and that the right approach to life involves the readiness to accept failure, but to use it as a milestone on the way to success.

However, it was his background in the language and culture of the Arab world that claimed his attention when he was invited to become a Research Fellow and presently a Lecturer in the Centre for Arab Gulf Studies at Exeter University, for which he was uniquely qualified both by experience and by academic knowledge. At the same time he found himself much in demand as a speaker at meetings of all kinds and as one who could explain clearly and with authority to radio and television audiences the ins and outs of successive foreign affairs crises. In this way he developed presently what was almost a second career — and it was characteristic that he was always as

ready to address audiences in schools and the equivalent of the local mothers' union as to take part in seminars at St Antony's in Oxford.

Anthony Parsons would have described his life as a happy one and so it was; and yet fate struck him two fearful blows when first one and then the other of his two sons died without warning. These were wounds from which he never recovered, even though he had the solace of an exceptionally happy marriage and two daughters with whom he enjoyed a very close and affectionate relationship.

Apart from this, if he had one enduring regret it was that as an Englishman and a diplomat with long experience in the field of international affairs, he had not been able to correct the injustices to which, in part through the mistakes of British governments, the Palestinian people had been subjected and he still being subjected today. This was something he felt deeply and which was close to his heart throughout his long involvement with the politics of the Middle East.

Michael Adams

When he was United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the United Nations between 1979 and 1982, writes Tam Dalyell, Anthony Parsons and

his wife Sheila opened their home and gave of their time to the regular rotating visiting group of Members of Parliament who went annually to New York in the autumn. One felt, genuinely, that they welcomed elected representatives, warts and all, and did not regard us, as sometimes happens in the Foreign Office, as a nuisance and "visiting firemen".

Parsons adored argument and was engagingly open to opinions certainly other than his own, and I believe, his own. It was perhaps typical of him, that when in a round-table briefing I vehemently dissented from Mrs Thatcher's anti-Russian, pro-Mujahedin line on Afghanistan, he replied in kind, and at the end of the meeting asked me to wait a moment. "As you are seriously interested, I will arrange for you to go and see my Russian colleague, Oleg Trianovsky, who will give you comfort for your view."

As good as his word he arranged that the following day I should turn up at the fortress in New York which was the headquarters of the Russian delegation in New York. Conducted to Mr Trianovsky's study, I opened with the remark that it was kind of him to give me time. The veteran Russian diplomat, accompanied by Anatoly Dobrynin, the long-

standing Soviet ambassador to Washington, said, "We wouldn't have seen you normally. But since Anthony Parsons suggested that we should and we have such a high regard for Anthony Parsons, we decided that we would." To impress Trianovsky, Dobrynin and in the same year Margaret Thatcher was quite some achievement for a diplomat.

It was not only the Russians who were impressed, so were most of his UN colleagues; and those who heard his frequent contributions in the last 15 years to the BBC radio programme *The World Tonight* will have no difficulty in understanding why. Parsons was extremely eloquent and always had something worth saying. Even those of us who were appalled by Mrs Thatcher's attitude to the 1982 Falklands crisis recognise that it was Parsons and Sir Nicholas Henderson in Washington who played a crucial role in rallying Americans to the British cause and neutralising many potentially hostile members of the UN. Parsons was a tremendously energetic operator.

In later years, a possible *mea culpa* had a pre-eminent place in his mind. It concerned what he called without doubt the most compelling and absorbing experience of his diplomatic life,

ending up when he left Tehran towards the end of January 1979, a few days after the Shah and his family had fled into exile.

"Could I," he would ask, "as British ambassador have been more perceptive in the years immediately before the revolution broke out?"

"Should I have anticipated that the forces of opposition to the Shah — the religious classes, the bazaar, the students — would combine to destroy him, although each of these groups was hostile to the regime for a different reason? Could I," Parsons would ask his friends, "have known in advance that the combination of these civilian, unarmed, elements would prove too strong for a regime whose power was based on united, well-armed, well-equipped and loyal armed forces backed by what appeared to be a formidable security apparatus — the dreaded Savak?"

"Had I been able to see so deep into the heart of Iranian society," he would sigh, "would I have advised my government, as well as the British private and public sectors — different in all fields including our political and strategic relationship with the Shah, our commercial and financial links with Iran oil, the sale of military equipment and much else?"

"If we had adopted different policies across the broad spectrum of our dealings with Iran, would this," he murmured, "have lessened the damage to British interests when the collapse finally came?"

Historians in the 21st century and later, when they come to study our century, and its most momentous events, cannot possibly ignore the book *The Pride and the Fall* in which Parsons addresses so perceptively these questions.

He was a man of enormous insight, a most impressive representative of the Foreign Office.

Anthony Derrick Parsons, diplomat; born 9 September 1922; MC 1945; staff, HM Embassies, Ankara 1955-59, Amman 1959-60, Cairo 1960-61, Khartoum 1961-63; Political Agent, Bahrain 1963-65; LVO 1963; CMG 1969; KCMG 1973; CMC 1982; Counsellor, UK Mission to UN 1969-71; Under-Secretary, FCO 1971-74; Ambassador to Iran 1974-79; UK Permanent Representative to UN 1979-82; Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs 1982-83; Research Fellow, Exeter University 1984-96; Lecturer 1984-87; author of *The Pride and the Fall* 1984. They Say the Lion 1986. From Cold War to Hot Peace: UN interventions 1947-1994 1995; married 1948 Sheila Babi (two daughters, and two sons deceased); died Ashburton, Devon 12 August 1996.

Imam Muhammad al-Badr

Muhammad al-Badr bin Ahmad Hamid al-Din was the last imam and king of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen.

A sayyid and thus a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatima, al-Badr was also a scion of Imam al-Hadi Yahya bin al-Fayyaz, who established a Zaydi Shia state in Sana'a in northern Yemen in the last decade of the ninth century. He was the last of a succession of more than 70 imams who ruled in the Yemen until 1962. His great-grandfather al-Mansur Muhammad was Imam and his grandfather was al-Mutawakkil Yahya, who became Imam in 1904. Yahya and then his son Imam Ahmad (al-Badr's father) succeeded in maintaining the independence of the Yemen despite the British occupation of Aden and the whole of what was then, South Yemen.

Muhammad al-Badr was born in 1929 in the town of Hajjah in north-west Yemen, where his father Sayf al-Islam Ahmad was governor on behalf of Imam Yahya. His mother was Sharifa Safiyya bint Muhammad from the sayyid family of al-Iss of Shabara. In Hajjah he received a traditional Yemeni education in the Koran, Islamic religion, Arabic grammar and syntax.

In 1944 he moved to Ta'izz in the south of the country, where his father had already been the Imam's deputy for several years, to continue his education. Soon after the cruel assassination of Imam Yahya in February 1948 plotted by Sayyid Abdullah al-

Wazir, al-Badr arrived in Sana'a, the capital, but apparently only gave tacit support to the new regime. Meanwhile Sayf al-Islam Ahmad had managed to get away from Ta'izz and made for Hajjah, where he gathered the tribes around him, proclaimed himself Imam with the title of al-Nasir and within a month of the assassination had easily regained control of Sana'a and executed the principal perpetrators of the rebellion.

Sayf al-Islam al-Badr (as Muhammad now became), not yet 20, was clearly able to patch up speedily any misunderstandings with his father, for in late 1949 he was appointed his deputy over Hodeida, the im-

portant port on the Red Sea. He was also made Minister of the Interior.

Al-Badr played a prominent role in quelling the revolt against Imam Ahmad in 1955 led by Ahmad's brother Sayf al-Islam Abdullah and afterwards was declared Crown Prince. During the remaining period of Imam Ahmad's rule he held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs and from 1958 was also the Imam's deputy over Sana'a. In 1959 he was put in complete charge of the Yemen for a few months during Imam Ahmad's absence in Italy for medical treatment. An assassination attempt on the life of Imam Ahmad in March 1961 left the

latter gravely crippled and in October Sayf al-Islam al-Badr took over effective control of the government.

On 19 September 1962 Ahmad died in his sleep, al-Badr was proclaimed Imam and King and took the title of al-Mansur, but a week later rebels shelled his residence, Dar al-Bashar, in the Bir al-Azab district of Sana'a and set up a republic.

Al-Badr had, when Crown Prince, like most young Arab leaders of his generation, been a great admirer of the Egyptian President Jamal Abd al-Nasir and had even arranged during his father's absence in Italy for Egyptian experts to come and help modernise the Yemen in all

fields, including the military. His father moreover had incorporated Yemen into the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria, which then became the United Arab States. It is thus ironic that the Yemen revolution of 26 September 1962 was largely instigated and planned by Egyptians and that without a massive Egyptian presence in the Yemen for five years afterwards the Yemen Arab Republic could never have survived.

Although the revolution had announced to the world that al-Badr had died beneath the rubble of his palace he had in fact managed to escape unhurt and had set out to the north. As he proceeded on his journey the tribes rallied round him pledging him their unconditional allegiance as Amir al-Mumtineen ("Prince of the Faithful"). These tribes were zealous Zaydi Shia for whom unstinted loyalty to an Imam from the Ahl al-Bayt (the descendants of the Prophet) was a fundamental obligation of their religion. A few days later he held a press conference over the border in south-west Saudi Arabia. His uncle Sayf al-Islam al-Hasan, who had been abroad and had been proclaimed Imam at the news of al-Badr's alleged demise, immediately gave allegiance to him together with all the princes of the Hamid al-Din family. Soon the entire tribal confederation of Bakil along with most of Hashid who occupied the central and northern highlands of the Yemen and who had been Zaydis for centuries joined

enthusiastically the cause of the Imam and the princes to fight the revolutionary regime.

During the bloody civil war which continued for eight years al-Badr, like his cousins, played a vital role. He lived alongside his men the life of a warrior, sharing with them every deprivation and hardship. He set up his headquarters in various places in the scenically spectacular mountainous north-west Yemen, on Jebel Qara, for instance, in the region of Hajjah al-Sham and at al-Muhahisha high up above the Thima plain. These HQs situated in caves fitted out with every basic facility deep in the mountainside were nevertheless constantly under the threat of Egyptian bombardment from the air. In 1967 al-Badr left his HQ at Mahayan near Hajjah for Ta'if in Saudi Arabia, where he stayed until the end of the war.

In 1970, despite the fact that territorially most of the Yemen remained under the control of al-Badr and the Hamid al-Din family, Saudi Arabia, which had been the principal opponent of the Sana'a regime, recognised the Yemen Arab Republic and other nations like the United Kingdom swiftly followed suit.

Stunned by Saudi Arabia's recognition of the republican regime which had been negotiated without any consultation with him whatsoever, al-Badr refused to stay any longer in Saudi Arabia and demanded that he be permitted to leave the kingdom immediately. He went to England, where he lived quietly in a modest house in Kent, only going abroad to visit the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and to call on relatives and friends in that part of the world. He died last week in London.



The young al-Badr, left, with his father, Imam Ahmad

ety in a modest house in Kent, only going abroad to visit the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and to call on relatives and friends in that part of the world. He died last week in London.

Al-Badr was a man of great courtesy, kindness and personal charm. He loved dearly the Yemeni people and was essentially a man of peace. When I asked him a few years after he arrived in Britain whether he had plans to return to the Yemen as Imam he replied without hesitation that he would do so only at the invita-

tion of the whole Yemeni nation. He said he would never allow a terrible civil war to rage once again in his beloved country.

A. R. D. R. Eagle

Muhammad al-Badr bin Ahmad Hamid al-Din, born Hajjah, Yemen 25 February 1929; succeeded 1962 as Imam al-Mansur Muhammad al-Badr, King of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of the Yemen, deposed 1962; three times married (two sons, two daughters); died London 6 August 1996.



The life of a warrior: al-Badr during Yemen's eight-year civil war Photograph: Lora Kloracki/Camera Press

BIRTHS

COLLONS On 9 August 1996, to Maria (nee Debono) and Martin, a son, Nathan John.

DEATHS

RANDALL The Rev David William, aged 49 years. Peacefully in the presence of his partner, Rita, at the London Light House, on Tuesday 13 August 1996. Funeral service, Holy Innocents Church, Fodenewick Road, Hammersmith, London W12, on Friday 23 August at 2.30pm. Followed by private cremation. No flowers by request.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

For complete BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-353 2811. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Marriages

Mr M. C. J. Gibson and Miss L. Kenrick The marriage took place on Friday 9 August, at Tisbury, Wilt, between Matthew Gibson and Lona Kenrick, both of Camberwell, London.

Birthdays

Miss Sarah Brightman, soprano, 35; Mr Ronald Campbell MP, 53; Mr

David Crosby, singer, 55; Mrs Jennifer d'Abo, chairman, Moyes Stevens Investments, 51; Mr Fred Davis, snooker player, 83; Vice-Admiral John Dunt, Chief of Defence Staff (Systems), 52; Mr Buddy Greco, jazz pianist and singer, 70; Dr Keith Hampshire MP, 53; Mr David Hopkinson, former chairman, Harrisons and Crossfield, 70; The Rev Dom Anthony Philip Jebb, former Head Master, Downside School, 64; Professor Sir Andrew Kay, surgeon, 80; Sir Stuart McKinnon, High

Court judge, 58; Sir Robin McLaren, former ambassador to China, 62; Mr Steve Martin, actor and comedian, 51; Lord Mishcon, solicitor, 81; Dr Oliver Neville, consultant to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, 67; Mr Frederic Raphael, novelist, 45; Mr Tony Scannell, actor, 51; Sir Ronald Slevin, former chairman, London Brick Co, 93; The Right Rev Hewien Thompson, Bishop of Exeter, 67; Lord Whaddon, former MP, chairman, Cambridge Chemical Co, 69; Mr Sydney Wooderson, athlete, 82.

Anniversaries

Births: Dr Florence Estienne Méric Casaubon, classical scholar, 1599; Samuel Sebastian Wesley, composer, 1810; Sir Walter Besant, novelist and philanthropist, 1856; John Galsworthy, novelist and playwright, 1867. Deaths: Augustus Montague Toplady, hymn-writer and author of "Rock of Ages", 1778; Admiral David (James) Glasgow Farragut, naval officer, 1870; Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, first Viscount

Northcliffe, newspaper proprietor, 1922; William Randolph Hearst, newspaper proprietor, 1951; Bertolt Brecht, writer, 1956; Leonard Sidney Woolf, publisher, 1969; Jules Romains (Louis Farigoule), novelist, playwright and poet, 1972; John Boynton Priestley, novelist and playwright, 1984. On this day: the French repulsed William of Orange at the Battle of Moss, 1678; Japan surrendered to the Allies unconditionally, 1945; following flooding, British troops were moved to Northern Ireland to

restore order, 1969; after peace talks in Cyprus broke down, Turkish troops launched an attack on Nicosia, 1974. Today is the Feast Day of St Athanasia of Aegina, St Eusebia of Rome, St Fuchuanan, St Marcellus of Apamea and St Maximilian Kolbe.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Band played the Queen's Life Guard of Horse Guards, 11am. The Grenadier Guards played the Queen's Guard, 11.30am. Band provided by the 1st Grenade.

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Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		DOLLAR		D-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	3 months
US	1581	94	91-92	1000	08772
Canada	2204	11-3	3907	1372	08706
Germany	29948	124-10	140-180	14767	26-24
France	72564	43-10	368-304	50590	78-68
Italy	12055	48-53	365-360	7961	217-207
Japan	16232	76-70	226-274	7072	45-44
ECU	16039	1-11	45-40	12715	1-8
Belgium	4221	81-7	255-250	12715	23-25
Netherlands	25557	159-16	466-460	57468	85-85
Netherlands	26559	57-57	107-104	15559	35-35
Ireland	35624	71-71	20-94	1671	47-47
Spain	30914	339-50	616-600	1370	10-10
Spain	30923	71-71	69-86	15375	37-27
Sweden	10309	0-0	0-0	64844	3-22
Switzerland	1505	54-46	75-52	1374	10-12
Switzerland	1505	20-21	65-65	1334	21
Hong Kong	11955	101-61	224-70	77338	10-10
Malaysia	33891	0-0	0-0	74839	4-11
Thailand	12533	43-57	20-15	8662	30-32
Saudi Arabia	51974	0-0	0-0	37526	2-7
Singapore	23876	0-0	0-0	14259	21-30

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15494	0.9587	Nigeria	24112	80.0000
Austria	87567	0.9588	Philippines	63539	0.9589
Brazil	10706	0.9590	Poland	62445	0.9591
China	82880	0.9590	Portugal	406577	262.700
Egypt	34495	0.9591	Russia	225537	50.850
France	44480	0.9592	Saudi	6481	15.60
Germany	256263	167.320	Spain	82101	500.000
Greece	356300	226.500	South Africa	70038	45.975
India	10706	0.9593	Taiwan	73396	20.000
Kenya	164640	0.9595	UAE	50386	356.24

Tourist Rates

C Baya	C Baya	C Baya
Australia Dollars 1935	France (Franc) 75800	New Zealand (Dollar) 2 2250
Austria/Schilling 16600	Germany (Mark) 2 2700	Norway/Krone 86800
Belgium/Franc 45 7200	Greece/Dramas 268 0000	Portugal/Pescudo 228 2000
Canada Dollar 3 2500	Hong Kong/Dollar 16875	Saudi Pesetas 160 0000
Cyprus/Pound 6 8800	Ireland/Pound 8365	Sweden/Krona 6 6000
Denmark/Krone 86 8000	Italy/Lira 2304 0000	Switzerland/Franc 180 000
Holland/Guilder 24 8200	Japan/Yen 64 7600	Taiwan/New \$ 2 315 0000
Finland/Marke 6 4500	Malaysia 8 3375	United States/Dollar 1590

UK Base	5.75%	Germany Discount	25.5%	US Prime	8.75%	Japan Discount	0.50%
France		Lombard	45.0%	Discount	5.00%	Belgium Discount	
Interbank	3.5%	Cash/rep	7.00%	91-Day	5.25%	Discount	2.50%
Discount		Prime	5.00%	30-Day	5.00%	Central	3.25%
Netherlands	6.25%	Discount		Swiss		Northeast	
Advances	26.5%	Discount	32.5%	Bankers		Discount	1.5%
				Rate (Avg)	5.00%	Lombard	4.00%

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %	Country	5 yr	Yield %	10 yr	yield %
UK	7 7/8	7 7/8	1 1/8	7 7/8	Netherlands	8 1/8	5 3/8	6 1/8	6 3/8
US	6 1/4	6 3/8	5 1/8	6 5/8	Spain	9 1/8	6 1/8	8 1/8	8 3/8
Japan	5 1/8	2 5/8	3 1/8	3 1/8	Italy	9 1/8	6 3/4	9 1/8	9 3/8
Australia	9 3/4	7 5/8	6 1/8	8 1/8	Belgium	5 1/8	5 3/8	7 1/8	8 1/8
Germany	5 3/8	5 1/8	6 3/8	6 7/8	Sweden	1	7 1/8	8 1/8	8 1/8
France	5 1/8	5 1/8	7 1/8	6 3/8	ECU GW	0	5 1/8	1 1/8	5 1/8

	OverNight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	3/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8
Storing CDs		5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8
Local Authority Depo	3/4	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8
Discount Market Depo	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8
Treasury Bills (Buy)		5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8
Dollar CDs		5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8	5/8

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Liffe FT-SE Index Option				
Settlement price: 3824.00		closing offer price		Call/Put
Series				Total/Vol
Aug	3780	3600	3850	3600
Aug	79/1	33/8	52/9	1/75
Sep	12/27	77/42	49/84	27/93
Oct	133/43	101/61	71/82	48/108
Nov	154/60	121/78	92/98	67/123

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange

Commodity	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks	chg
Aluminium (A/CL)	500.0	500.0	52,500	10,750	0
Copper (C/CL)	527.75	528.0	48,400	10,000	0
Lead (L/CL)	862.25	870.0	2,000	5,500	0
Nickel (N/CL)	815.00	815.00	10,000	50	0
Zinc (Z/CL)	715.50	717.0	24,000	370	0
Steel	650.50	2,000	5,700	0	0
Iron	505.0	520	10,000	0	0

Futures: 1 m 10000
 3 m 10000
 12 m 10000

Total volume & change in stocks as at 12 August

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Oil prices (pennycents)									
Cr	March (No.3)	\$/tonne	5550	Aug	Soyab Oil	FL/100kg	8500		
100	Crude (No.3)	\$/tonne	5500		Coconut Oil (I)	\$/tonne	86300		
100	Copra (FV)	US\$/cwt	7325	Sep	Sunflower Oil	\$/tonne	58100		
100	100		76500	Nov-Jan	Refined Oil	FL/100kg	9000		
100	Rubber	US\$/cwt	29400	Aug	Groundnut Oil	\$/tonne	92000		

Source: *Oil Price* © early 1992. *Indonesia includes Kalimantan. **1990 London. Source: FT Information Services

ENERGY									
Crude Oil									
		(\$/tonne)	Gasol	(\$/tonne)	WTI				(\$/tonne)
100	3.00pm	100kg	Yr ago	100	100kg	100kg	100kg	100kg	100kg
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Oil Price* © early 1992. *Indonesia includes Kalimantan. **1990 London. Source: FT Information Services

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1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586
1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586

See 2000 Year Book & Co. 1000 at a discount and payment of 1000 Year Book & Co. (Class of 9-10-1999)

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Rank	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586
1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																											

Harmon Road S 4	2596	3553	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5275	5275
Harvey S 2	2597	3554	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5276	5276
Hayes Industrial	2598	3555	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5277	5277
Hayes Industrial	2599	3556	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5278	5278
Hayes Industrial	2600	3557	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5279	5279
Hayes Industrial	2601	3558	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5280	5280
Hayes Industrial	2602	3559	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5281	5281
Hayes Industrial	2603	3560	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5282	5282
Hayes Industrial	2604	3561	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5283	5283
Hayes Industrial	2605	3562	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5284	5284
Hayes Industrial	2606	3563	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5285	5285
Hayes Industrial	2607	3564	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5286	5286
Hayes Industrial	2608	3565	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5287	5287
Hayes Industrial	2609	3566	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5288	5288
Hayes Industrial	2610	3567	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5289	5289
Hayes Industrial	2611	3568	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5290	5290
Hayes Industrial	2612	3569	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5291	5291
Hayes Industrial	2613	3570	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5292	5292
Hayes Industrial	2614	3571	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5293	5293
Hayes Industrial	2615	3572	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5294	5294
Hayes Industrial	2616	3573	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5295	5295
Hayes Industrial	2617	3574	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5296	5296
Hayes Industrial	2618	3575	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5297	5297
Hayes Industrial	2619	3576	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5298	5298
Hayes Industrial	2620	3577	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5299	5299
Hayes Industrial	2621	3578	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5300	5300
Hayes Industrial	2622	3579	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5301	5301
Hayes Industrial	2623	3580	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5302	5302
Hayes Industrial	2624	3581	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5303	5303
Hayes Industrial	2625	3582	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5304	5304
Hayes Industrial	2626	3583	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5305	5305
Hayes Industrial	2627	3584	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5306	5306
Hayes Industrial	2628	3585	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5307	5307
Hayes Industrial	2629	3586	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5308	5308
Hayes Industrial	2630	3587	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5309	5309
Hayes Industrial	2631	3588	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5310	5310
Hayes Industrial	2632	3589	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5311	5311
Hayes Industrial	2633	3590	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5312	5312
Hayes Industrial	2634	3591	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5313	5313
Hayes Industrial	2635	3592	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5314	5314
Hayes Industrial	2636	3593	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5315	5315
Hayes Industrial	2637	3594	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5316	5316
Hayes Industrial	2638	3595	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5317	5317
Hayes Industrial	2639	3596	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5318	5318
Hayes Industrial	2640	3597	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5319	5319
Hayes Industrial	2641	3598	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5320	5320
Hayes Industrial	2642	3599	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5321	5321
Hayes Industrial	2643	3600	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5322	5322
Hayes Industrial	2644	3601	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5323	5323
Hayes Industrial	2645	3602	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5324	5324
Hayes Industrial	2646	3603	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5325	5325
Hayes Industrial	2647	3604	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5326	5326
Hayes Industrial	2648	3605	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5327	5327
Hayes Industrial	2649	3606	Laurel S. Montgomery Rd	5328	5328
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UNIT TRUST GUIDE

ex dividend
exit charge applies
when units are sold
formerly 'offer'
formerly 'bid'
Non SIB recognised funds



Grid looks vulnerable as watchdog locks on

Professor Stephen Littlechild has seen the future and it appears to be Spottiswoode coloured. There was never any doubt that the electricity industry regulator was going to come down hard on the National Grid. But the example of his counterpart over at Ofgas, Clare Spottiswoode, has given him fresh inspiration and fresh ideas about how to apply the thumbscrews in the most unpleasant way possible.

The new price control formula proposed yesterday by Prof Littlechild for the Grid was harsher than the City had been expecting and it has duly produced the predicted howls of anguish.

David Jones, the Grid's chief executive, managed to stop short of accusing the good professor of expropriating shareholders' funds — one of the many colourful charges levelled by British Gas against its regulator. But he is clearly a far from happy man. The proposals, he fulminates, are unprecedented in their severity and illogicality and amount, moreover, to penalising the business for its past success.

The chairman of British Gas, Dick Giordano, might question the bit about them being unprecedented, but otherwise, he must be in common cause today, mourning the beastly way regulators take with one hand and rob with the other.

As for the National Grid, all those months spent with Ofgas explaining why the business is absolutely nothing like BG's Transco (except that both are monopolies,

both run nationwide systems for transmission of energy and both have grown fat on bumper profits) have come to nought.

Prof Littlechild has concluded it is indeed a lot like Transco and, like Ms Spottiswoode, he has decided to remedy the situation by recalculating the value of the regulatory asset base on which the Grid is permitted to make a return. This may sound like arcane stuff that only academics such as the professor could be bothered to spend time on but it is of critical importance to Transco and the Grid. Prof Littlechild has decided, not unreasonably, that the worth of the Grid should bear some relation to what shareholders paid for the assets, not solely their current cost replacement value based on the figures in the accounts.

In this way the value of the business falls from £5bn (the Grid's figure) to £4bn (Offer's figure). Unless Mr Jones can come up with some impressive reductions in running costs, he is looking at a big hit on profits.

This is where the piecer movement takes effect. The Grid reckons it can only shave 2 per cent a year at most from operating costs. The Professor believes it can do twice as well, pointing to a legion of studies by management consultants and the Grid's own past performance.

In reality the gulf between the two sides may not be as big as the Grid might have us believe. The main dispute on asset valuation concerns its telecommunication arm, Energis, which the Grid says is worth nothing

and Offer values at £400m. The actual effect of this, however, is not great — only £28m a year off operating profits of £656m. Likewise 4 per cent annual efficiency gains hardly look daunting against the 35 per cent achieved in the previous five years and the Grid's declining capital expenditure profile.

But there is a bigger picture which the gridlocked Mr Jones is missing. His company is unpopular. Its boardroom excesses are legion and it needed to be dragged kicking and screaming into giving customers a £50 rebate at the time of flotation. The new price curbs, even as they stand, would only mean £4 off the average bill. Prof Littlechild is hardly likely to settle for less than that after his maladroit handling of the first electricity distribution price review.

Supposing Ms Spottiswoode stands her ground with Transco, then Prof Littlechild's hand can only be strengthened. Grid shareholders may not like it, but they can't say they weren't set an example. Hanson's timing in selling out at 192.5p is looking better by the day.

The story about the institutional investor which sold its shares in Matthew Clark because it disapproved of excessive relocation expenses for directors is quite the most amusing financial vignette yet to have emerged from the silly season.

This is not because of the episode itself — for a small cider company like Matthew

Clarke to pay its finance director nearly £500,000 to move house is an undeniably disgraceful episode which demands protest — but because the institution involved over publicised the matter and even now is reluctant to emerge from behind the veil. It's a bit like the terrorist bomb for which no organisation ever claims responsibility. The public at large is led to believe there is something, somewhere that someone is not very happy about but the point is lost because nobody is prepared to stand up and be counted.

There is a serious point to this story, however. Institutional shareholders are the only people who can actually do anything worthwhile about boardroom excess but so far they have proved remarkably reluctant to act. Fund managers have always regarded executive pay as largely irrelevant to the primary objective of maximising investment returns, and in any case, many of them are quite highly paid themselves.

But things are changing. There is a growing realisation among fund managers that boardroom excess does matter, and not just because the public at large is outraged by it or because pension fund trustees are beginning to demand curbs. In smaller companies, excessive executive pay can amount to a very substantial proportion of the profits. And even in larger companies it has a tendency to drag up salary levels throughout the organisation, eventually making the company uncompetitive.

If the institutions are going to have any impact, however, they really do need to start putting their mouths where their money is. The silent protest, the quick sale, may make them feel worthy, it might even satisfy the pension fund trustees, but it hardly provides the example to others that is needed if the executive feeding frenzy is to be curbed.

The European Monetary Institute, the precursor to the European central bank, today publishes its first "progress report" on the Target project. If nothing else, this shows that while British euro-sceptics might continue to believe that the single European currency is never going to happen, or hope it won't in any case, everybody else in Europe is steaming ahead with preparations confident in the knowledge that it will.

Target, a system for settling big interbank transactions in the euro, is based largely on British expertise and structures. Just to invent the system, however, is not to participate in its workings, and beneath the picture painted in today's report of steady and harmonious progress lies a snakepit of disagreement and squabbles. The French and the Germans want EMU members to get better terms of access to intra-day credit in the Euro than those outside the new currency. The British naturally want a system that treats ins and outs the same. On this matter, there is no "progress" at all.

Merrill Lynch plans poaching raid on UK rivals

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Merrill Lynch, the giant US investment firm, is poised to launch a large-scale poaching raid on the staff of UK-based competitors, industry sources said yesterday, as it emerged that top media analyst Neil Blackley was leaving Goldman Sachs for Merrill Lynch at an estimated pay package worth as much as £200,000 a year.

The move was only the first in a series of expected departures from big UK firms, as Merrill Lynch, which owns the UK stockbroker Smith New Court, aims to bolster its corporate finance and financial analysis teams in London.

Sources indicated that the oil sector could be a likely target, as the US-owned firm looks to improve its research standing in those areas where it is considered weaker than the general market.

Mr Blackley, who takes his colleague Meg Geldens with him to Merrill Lynch, was rated fifth in the Exel survey of research this year. He and then-partner Guy Lamming were

the top rated team when they worked for James Capel three years ago. They went to Goldman Sachs as a team in 1993, but Mr Lamming left to join SBC-Warburg last year.

The attraction of Merrill Lynch to Mr Blackley lay in the combination of international distribution and its strong UK base through Smith New Court, sources close to the analyst said yesterday.

Goldman Sachs had originally sought the services of Mr Blackley and Mr Lamming to increase its chances of winning lucrative corporate finance deals in the active media sector. The high level of merger activity in the industry has led many large firms to establish dedicated and highly paid teams to co-ordinate research and to bid for corporate finance accounts. Even small boutique operations have beefed up their commitment to media.

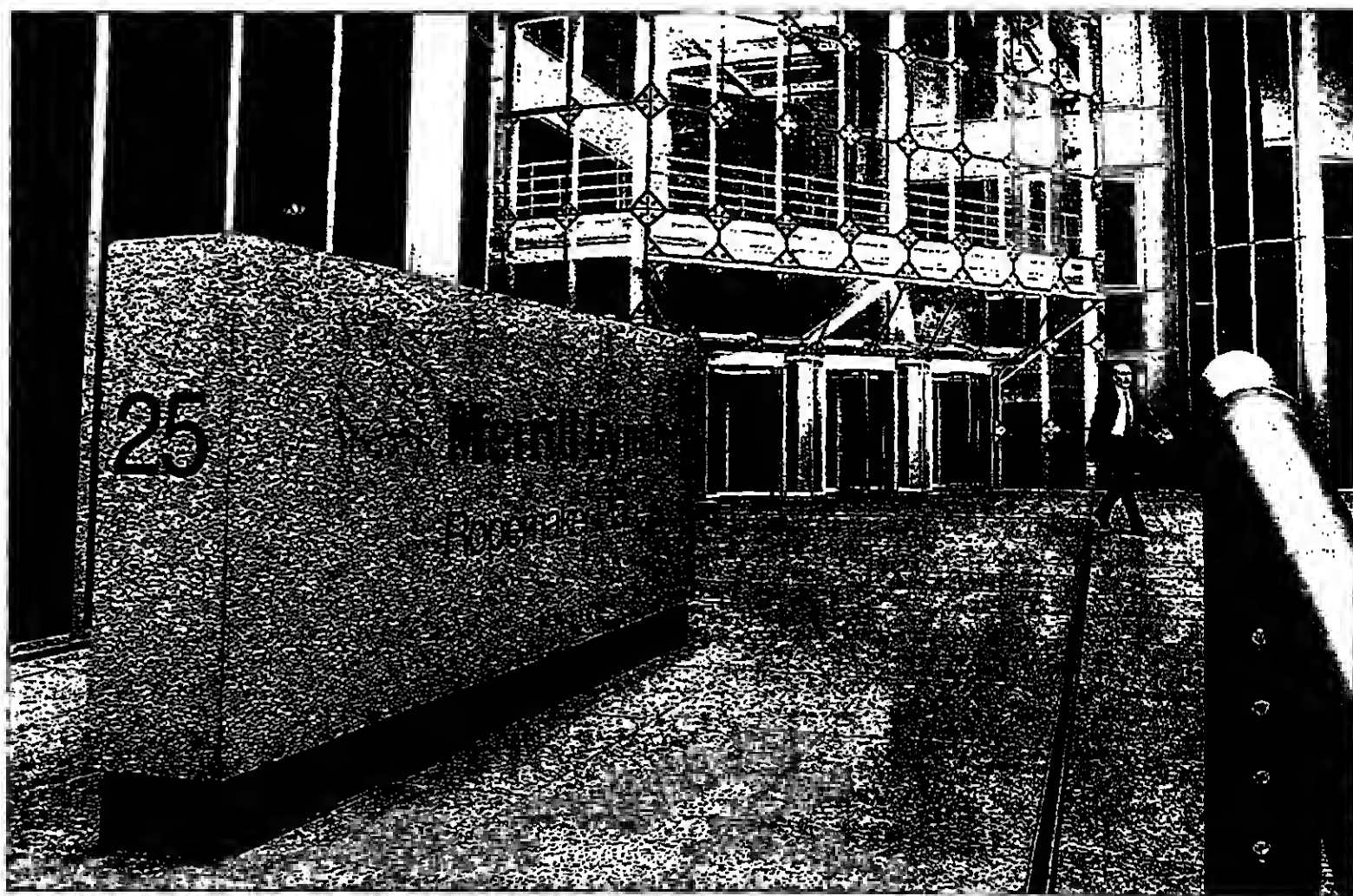
Mr Blackley was believed to have been in discussions about becoming a partner at Goldman Sachs. It was suggested yesterday that his package at Merrill Lynch was far less than he stood to gain by staying at the

rival US firm, although it was unclear whether a partnership had been formally offered.

Goldman sources indicated yesterday that the departure had been amicable. "We were sorry to see him go — he's a good lad," one source said. The firm intends to mount an international search for a replacement, and confirmed yesterday that it continued to view media as a core sector.

The game of musical chairs in the City has heated up in recent months, with Mr Blackley's predecessor at Merrill Lynch, Richard Dale, jumping ship with his partner David Forster to join Salomon Brothers earlier this year for a package estimated at £500,000 a year for the two. Merrill Lynch, which struggled for several months to replace the highly rated Dale-Forster team, has been particularly active in the head-hunting market, pinching Stephen

Reitman, the highly rated automotive analyst at UBS, earlier this year. Said a Merrill insider: "You can be sure there will be more announcements." The top media slot at Merrill had been left vacant for several



Feeling bullish: Merrill Lynch's London offices, one of the venues for a game of musical chairs in the City which has speeded up recently.

Smith New Court rump. Their resignations coincided with a minor flood of departures early in the year.

Merrill Lynch subsequently sought to regain the advantage,

signalling it would spend freely to develop leading edge research capabilities. "We want the lot," said a company insider.

The campaign to secure fresh talent is being viewed by some

City observers as slightly desperate. The critics suggest the large US firm has yet to soothe the tensions between its New York managers and the UK staff, particularly those who

remain from the Smith New Court days.

Mr Blackley is to spend a month on "garden leave", and will join his new firm toward the end of September.

Survival for insurers: Soft markets and link-ups are likely to increase competition

General Cable extends network

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Losses at General Cable, the UK cable operator, deepened in the first half of 1996 to £12.6m from £10.9m last year, as the company continued to build its extensive network. But Sir Anthony Cleaver, company chairman, said that average revenues per line were being maintained at the level achieved in the first quarter of this year.

General Cable also welcomed the Office of Fair Trading's ruling on satellite broadcaster BSkyB's supply of programming to the cable industry. Sir Anthony said that cable-exclusive programming, offering products not available on satellite, and additional ATM switching technology, would improve the company's penetration of the market. The new pricing regime would also enable cable operators to undercut BT.

Comcast Partners, meanwhile, reported consolidated revenues of £11.8m in the six months to June, up from £653,000 last time. The consolidated operating cash-flow deficit was £3.6m.

Comcast UK's cable lines currently pass more than 837,000 homes, and its cable-TV subscribers have increased by 38 per cent, the residential telephony subscribers by 55 per cent and the business telephony subscribers by 39 per cent. The company has interests in four integrated cable television, residential telephony and business telephony systems in the UK, together these could serve approximately 1.6 million homes.



In focus: GA's chief executive, Bob Scott (right), being photographed with newly appointed group executive director Philip Twyman. Photograph: Andrew Burman

General Accident dismisses worries about takeovers

MAGNUS GRIMOND

General Accident, the Perth-based general and life insurer, yesterday dismissed any suggestion that recent mergers in the industry would increase competition. Bob Scott, chief executive, said consolidation had been a factor in the UK for years. "It won't change the dynamics of the industry. We're competing in segments of the market against some pretty small insurance companies."

General Accident's cost structure would be competitive, he said. The group plans to replace all existing computer systems with an integrated package and live off computer operations

to a new IBM subsidiary dedicated to insurance. The business will be based on GA's 350 computer employees.

Mr Scott spoke as analysts raised profit expectations for the group, prompting a 14p rise in the shares to 678p. Reduced weather losses in the second quarter helped GA claw back some of the damage inflicted by severe conditions across the world in the first three months of the year, although profits still slipped from £257m to £194m in the first-half year to June.

Steven Bird at brokers Merrill Lynch said he was raising his full year forecast to £411m, with net assets per share expected to hit 680p by the year end, up from 657p currently. The group had had a good second quarter, he said, although he cautioned that reserve movements meant too much should not be read into one quarter's figures.

GA said the integration of Provident Mutual, acquired earlier this year, was going faster than expected. The field force had already been integrated and the head office reorganisation was nearly complete, resulting in 620 staff departures. Integration and transitional costs were now likely to be about £20m this year, £5m less than expected.

Investment column, page 18

Sedgwick says merger would be considered

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Sedgwick, the world's third largest insurance broker, yesterday denied recent speculation that it was ready to merge with rival Willis Corroon, but said further industry consolidation was inevitable.

Sax Riley, chief executive, said the group would consider a merger if the strategy of a potential partner matched their own plans. "We continue to believe there is room for three or four global players... It could be construed that there are six people [in the market] at the moment."

The cake had got smaller and the margins thinner, Mr Riley said, but Sedgwick would be able to maintain its independent existence. The key to the future would be having control of their own distribution network and owning a large commodity brokerage business. "We can survive on our own... because we are well down the way, on our own strategy and we are using our own network," he added.

The comments came as Sedgwick warned that insurance rates had continued to tumble in most parts of the world. Mr Riley said the company would take a view on rates for the rest of the year in November, although they "remained confident of the final outcome for the full year". The tough trading conditions pegged Sedgwick's pre-tax profits to £64.1m in the half-year to June, a 2 per cent rise on the comparable period. Earnings per share rose 6.8 per cent to 7.8p, out of which an interim dividend of 3.75p is being paid, including a foreign income dividend enhancement of 0.75p.

The figures were below market expectations and the shares fell 5p to 125p yesterday. Robio Savage at brokers Credit Lyonnais Laing said there was disappointment that earnings growth was not coming through from top line growth. "If you look at the US revenues, these are flat, while flat UK revenues were made up for by growth in Europe and the Far East."

Willis Corroon has declared that it is ready to positively reorganise itself to grow in soft markets, but there has been no such clear message from Sedgwick, Mr Savage said.

Sedgwick's brokerage and fee income rose from £451m to £467m in the half-year, a 1 per cent rise in constant currency terms, while expenses were cut by 1 per cent on the same basis. Sedgwick Noble Lowndes, the employee benefits and financial services operations, saw underlying trading profits rise 12 per cent to £7.4m. But the increase would have been cut to 2 per cent if a £700,000 benefit on the sale of a US third party administration company is stripped out.

Mr Riley said he was more confident about the UK part of the business than he had been for a very long time. The aim was to raise the proportion of group income from consultancy and other fees to 50 per cent of the total from the current 35 per cent.

IN BRIEF

• The value of July retail sales rose 5.4 per cent on a like-for-like basis from a year earlier, according to the latest monthly survey by the British Retail Consortium. Although the growth rate of sales values was more moderate than in the previous two months, the underlying trend remains healthy, the BRC said. It noted that non-food sectors "generally performed better" than food in July, with sales of ice cream and soft drinks hit by the "mixed weather". Clothing and footwear sales were "relatively strong", and housing-related retail sectors were strong. BRC chief economist Andrew Seaman said that better consumer spending, and a pick-up in the world economy, "should feed through into better growth in the economy as a whole later this year."

• Renault, the French car-maker, reported a slide in first-half turnover but the decline was less pronounced than investors had feared after recent disappointing European and French car sales figures. Renault said group sales slipped 2.9 per cent to FF94.09bn FF96.208 bn. Renault's shares hit an all-time low of FF107 recently after June car sales figures showed its European market share had slipped to 9.6 per cent from 11.1 per cent in 1995 and its share of the French market to 26.5 per cent from 31.7 per cent. Renault's Laguna and recently launched Megane models have a higher ticket price than the smaller Clio and Twingo.

• Fujitsu of Japan said it obtained a US patent for its technology used for plasma display panels for large-sized TV screens. Fujitsu also said it plans to charge Japanese and Korean companies making PDPs in the U.S. for the rights. The technology is used to display colours with thick and thin tones on the screen. It said Fujitsu also is seeking to obtain patents for the same technology in Japan.

• The disruption caused by the threatened all-out strike by British Airways' pilots cost BA £10m, not BAA as may have been inferred from yesterday's report on page 17.

• Norway's Den norske Bank realised profits after taxes of NK 1.51 billion in the first half of 1996, compared with NK 1.67 billion in the corresponding period of last year. Net interest income totalled NK 2.1 billion in the first half of the year, compared with NK 2.13 billion in the first half of 1995. Net other operating income totalled NK 1.48 billion in the first half of the year, as against NK 1.43 billion in the same period of last year.

• Consumer prices in the US rose moderately in July, the Labor Department said, providing further evidence that inflationary pressures at the retail level are still largely muted. The consumer price index rose 0.3 per cent in the month following a 0.1 per cent rise in June as food and housing costs offset declines in energy. The rise was not a cause for big concern on the inflation front, Lewis Alexander, chief economist at the Commerce Department, said. "Any time inflation ticks up it is a source of concern, but I think if you look into the details of it, I think it's a little less alarming."

• Average weekly earnings of US workers, after adjusting for inflation and seasonal factors, fell 1.5 per cent in July, the Labor Department said. The July drop followed a 2.2 per cent rise in June real average weekly earnings. The July decrease stems from a 1.2 per cent drop in average weekly hours, a 0.2 per cent decline in average hourly earnings and a 0.2 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. Real average weekly earnings in July were off 0.4 per cent from July last year, the department said.

GA set to weather stormy times

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

The stock market has been anticipating a downturn in the insurance cycle for some time and, after last year's bumper results, shares in General Accident have marked time in 1996. But yesterday's first-half figures to June tend to support the group's own confidence that it can survive the onset of leaner times for the industry.

Stripping out realised investment gains, operating profits slid a quarter to £194m. However, much of the damage was weather-related, which has not been repeated in the second three-months of the year. This improvement helps to explain the better underwriting result this year (see table), particularly in the UK, even if storms in the Mid-West of the US continued to be a drag on second-quarter results. In all, weather cost an extra £56m in the half year, with US property accounts alone deteriorating by \$49m.

Weather lies outside the control of the insurance industry, so more encouraging were signs that, despite increasing competition, recent rate rises are sticking. First-half increases in the personal motor businesses ranging from 4 to 6 per cent helped turn a £9m underwriting loss in the first quarter into a modest £1m profit in the second.

The outlook for motor also looks reasonable. Despite these rate rises, GA has put on a further 25,000 clients in the six months, taking the total to 725,000, and is experiencing an 87 per cent renewal rate in its direct operation. A further 3.5 per cent hike in commercial motor, taking the rise for the year to 9.5 per cent, should also go some way to reversing the deteriorating trend there.

More worrying are the prospects for the UK household account, where GA warned that there are few signs of any rate increases. Indeed, more competition is hitting intermediaries' commissions, if not yet rates themselves.

But the excitement in GA at the moment lies on its life side. The integration of Provident Mutual, acquired in a £170m deal at the turn of the year, is going ahead faster than expected. The life insurer chipped in an unexpected £5m to the latest figures, with the costs of the merger lower and savings higher than originally forecast. The group remains on the lookout for further life acquisitions in Europe.

GA has proved canny in managing its existing UK life operation. Low past payout levels mean the fund has a surplus of over £1bn, at least part of which should eventually benefit shareholders.

Whether continued attempts to save costs, now to involve outsourcing all computer operations to a new IBM insurance subsidiary, will match savings from the Sun Alliance-Royal Insurance

merger remains to be seen. In the meantime, the shares, up 14p at 678p, stand on a forward yield of 6.1 per cent, assuming Merrill Lynch's dividend forecast is met. A firm hold.

New head boosts Sidlaw

Shares in Sidlaw, the packaging and oil services group, bounced 12p to 108p yesterday on news that the company has appointed a new chief executive. John Durston will replace Digby Morrow who was ousted in May following the company's disastrous plunge into the red.

Mr Durston joins from Valpack, a packaging industry body, but was previously at Lawson Mardon, a privately owned packaging group. With 30 years in the industry he is clearly experienced but he remains something of a dark horse in the City, mainly because he has never been a director of a public company.

The company has been in a terrible bind since it spent £79m on Courtald's

flexible packaging business three years ago. Having been criticised for overpaying, the company was hit by soaring raw material prices. It also chased volume, neglecting margins.

Two rights issues followed, one at 275p and another at 180p, and shareholders who took up their rights at those prices are no doubt feeling aggrieved. It was problems in packaging, including costs associated with the closure of a factory, that forced Sidlaw into a £4m loss at the half-year stage.

A trading update accompanied yesterday's chief executive appointment and it did contain some good news. The group was profitable in the three months to June with the upturn largely coming from the oil services division which is performing well. Trading at the packaging division remains patchy.

The challenge for Mr Durston is to create more shareholder value in a packaging market that is over-crowded. The oil services division may be sold off which would reduce gearing, fit a highly regarded business though some analysts question whether it is capable of dramatic growth.

Pamruss Gordon puts the break-up

value of the company at not much more than 100-110p per share. A takeover is possible but packaging companies would probably prefer to see capacity dropping out of the market rather than paying for it themselves.

Analysts are expecting pre-exceptional profits of around £1.1-£1.2m this year. But the shares have lost more than two-thirds of their value in the last two years and it looks like a long slog back.

Plugged in Pifco builds up steam

A 16 per cent jump in Pifco's pre-tax profits for the year to April from £2.7m to £3.12m showed the small appliance manufacturer is back on track after last year's disappointment. Despite chairman Michael Webber's perennial caution, consumer confidence is plainly reviving and prospects look brighter.

At this mature and relatively low-value added end of the electronics market, however, growth needs more than a general upturn in the economy. New products are essential, new geographical markets a help, and acquisitions are realistically the only way to provide economies of scale and wide-brand portfolios that will drive up margin growth.

No surprise then that after being left at the altar last year by a French hairdryer maker, Pifco is now actively seeking another deal, probably in Europe where it intends to generate half its sales, compared with the current 28 per cent of sales.

With £6.4m in the bank and a willingness to take on debts and issue new shares, there is plainly the scope to tackle a sizeable purchase. And with the successful integration of Russell Hobbs Tower a few years ago, Pifco has proved it does possess the management ability to take on a big challenge.

On the new product front, the introduction of new, patented, printed element technology for the 23 million-a-year world kettle market augurs well. Noticeably faster, more energy efficient and less prone to lime-scale than the traditional kettle, the new product can be expected to take a good slice of the 5 million UK market after it is introduced in September.

Forecasts for the current year of about £3.4m, for earnings of 18.9p, put the shares, up 5p to 269p, on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14. That suggests that the company is solid and well-managed, but compared with a relatively pedestrian growth rate of 7 per cent, it is high enough.

The building societies that definitely said 'No'

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



Getting tough: John Wriglesworth and B&B colleagues

Poor old Michael Hardern, self-employed butler and founder of "Members for Conversion", a ginger group for building society members who want remaining societies to convert to plc status and shower their customers with the resulting cash handouts.

Mr Hardern has been unceremoniously booted out by Bradford & Bingley, Chelsea, Nottingham and Britannia. His crime? For being "nothing but a nuisance, a troublemaker, a waster of members' money," according to B&B director John Wriglesworth.

Mr Hardern describes his expulsion as a member by the quartet as "outrageous. It's all very sad. Another democratic institution that doesn't want its members to participate in the running of it."

Mr Hardern's campaign came to a head when he asked the Building Society Commission for access to membership lists of all 52 remaining mutuals. The BSC turned him down, and Mr Wriglesworth's battalions took their cue, sending back whatever money (with interest) Mr Hardern had deposited with them, and informing him his custom was no longer welcome. "He's just after a quick buck," Mr Wriglesworth concluded.

Even for the hardened professionals, Facia's creditors meeting in London yesterday

Congratulations to Christopher Sheridan, former deputy chairman and chief executive of Samuel Montagu, one of the very few people in the City to reach the top of a merchant bank from starting as a humble forex trader.

Mr Sheridan retired from the HSBC-owned bank two years ago and has just been elected a non-executive director of City law firm Lovell White Durrant.

The 53-year-old Twickenham rugby fan adds this to a clutch of other non-exec directorships, including Yorkshire Building Society and Prudential-Bache International Bank.

Law firms are keen to grab top City types for their boards these days, as their share of corporate work increases. In the 25 years he was there Mr Sheridan built Samuel Montagu into one of the best foreign exchange operations in the City. For all that he is a "very modest chap," according to City colleagues.

was a pretty staid affair despite fresh Serious Fraud Office interest. The company's receiver, KPMG's Tony Thompson, had a dry run rehearsal beforehand, practising 160 of the trickiest likely questions. In the event, the massed ranks of KPMG, Grant Thornton and lawyers Nabarro Nathanson had to deal with just one query, without a scream or tantrum in the house.

There was hardly an actual creditor to be seen. A few suppliers, yes, who had (literally) lost their shirts, or several thousand quid to Facia's chairman Stephen Hinchliffe. Most of the 80 or so there were fellow accountants.

Many Scots have sailed off to the distant shores of Australia over the last two centuries. Now quite a few of them are coming back. On the circuit, apparently, these professional meeting goers are known as the "98 club" (after section 98 of the Insolvency Act). Section 98 enables creditors to convene a meeting to appoint a liquidator. Ambulance chasers, then, by another name.

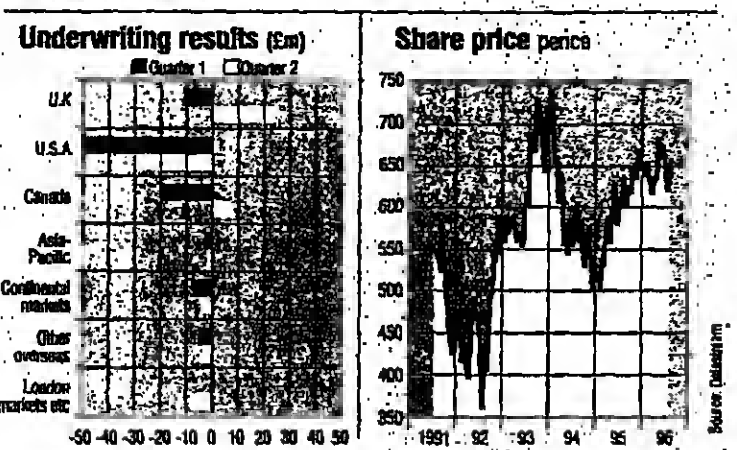
Bob Scott, chief executive of General Accident, has just recruited a fellow native of Sydney, Philip Twyman, as a group executive director in charge of finance. Mr Scott admits that both come from Australian-Scottish stock, and both have come from the same Antipodean city - but that the link ends there. They did not know each other down under, and it's not an Ozzy plot to take over the Perth-based insurer.

The link grows stronger. GA has just sent a Scot, Hector Smith, to Australia to run the company's business there.

GENERAL ACCIDENT: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £3.27bn, share price 678p

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1996
Pre-tax profits (£m)	295	504	559	300
Dividends per share (pence)	27.5	28.0	31.0	30.7



BOC forecasts reined back after warning

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

A veiled profits warning from BOC yesterday sent shares in the gases and healthcare group tumbling 40p, or 4 per cent, to 855p. The company's warning of problems in its vacuum products and healthcare businesses had analysts reaching for their red pens and reining back forecasts by almost 10 per cent.

conductor manufacturers, who are big customers of BOC's Edwards Vacuum Products subsidiary, were reappraising expansion plans. But BOC confirmed its faith in the long-term prospects for the industry. Analysts took a less sanguine view. "What BOC has delivered at today's meeting is effectively a profits warning," one said. Consensus forecasts for the year to September fell from about £450m to between £438m

and £440m. For the year to September 1997 forecasts of £505m were replaced by a range of £460m to £470m. The company also flagged problems at its Onmeda healthcare business which makes the Forane anaesthetic, and saw profits fall 27 per cent in the third quarter to June. For the nine-month period to that date, profits were 15 per cent lower. Danny Rosenkrantz, the chief executive, who took over

from Pat Rich at the beginning of the year, said third-quarter price competition in the anaesthetic product market "was very acute", affecting profitability for its Forane product. Prices fell faster than the group anticipated, he said, and "are set to deteriorate further" in the fourth quarter. The news took the edge off group profits for the nine months, which managed an 11 per cent rise to £327.3m on an

8 per cent increase in turnover to £299.9m. Higher profits were driven by an 11 per cent rise in the core gases business as margins improved in most regions. BOC is building a 1,290-tonnes-a-day oxygen and nitrogen plant in India which it hopes will give it a foothold in the east of the sub-continent. The company has also made its first move into the Russian industrial gases market with a conditional agreement to acquire a

controlling interest in Volgograd Oxygen, one of Russia's top three industrial gases companies. Despite the warning on future prospects, vacuum products actually had a strong third quarter with profits 35 per cent higher, or 37 per cent up in the year so far. BOC said it was considering listing its shares on the New York Stock Exchange through an ADR programme. Trading could start in late September.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
BOC (p)	2,800m (2.61bn)	327m (295m)	42.17p (37.88p)	31p (+)
Epine Group (t)	34.4m (33.4m)	2.0m (2.8m)	6p (8.2p)	2.9p (2.9p)
General Accident (t)	- (-)	194m (257m)	49.3p (44.5p)	11.4p (+)
General Cable (t)	30.1m (14.2m)	-12.6m (-10.9m)	-4.7p (-4.5p)	0p (+)
Parsons (t)	65.2m (24.8m)	2.71m (1.35m)	7.70p (6.88p)	1.7p (+)
Pifco (t)	41.8m (37.4m)	3.1m (2.7m)	17.6p (16p)	5.45p (+95p)
Sidlaw Group (t)	- (-)	64.1m (63.1m)	7.8p (7.3p)	3.75p (3p)
VOC (t)	64.1m (54.2m)	1.65m (1.31m)	16.62p (12.86p)	5.3p (+4.75p)

(t) - First (t) - Interim (p) - Nine months

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Rathbone acquires Liverpool broker

NIC CICUTTI

Rathbone Brothers, the quoted private banking and asset management group, yesterday agreed takeover terms worth £15.9m for Neilson Cobbold, one of Liverpool's oldest stock-broking firms.

The combined company will have more than £2.3bn in discretionary funds under management, plus a further £1.5bn in advisory funds, of which £300m are held in personal equity plans.

The deal will also allow Rathbone to develop its coverage outside its traditional London and Liverpool heartlands into the South and North-west of England, together with Scotland.

Micky Ingall, chief executive at Rathbone, said: "Taken with the acquisition of Lawrence Keen [the stockbrokers] last year, this will meet our core objective of building a major business group specialising in the provision of investment management and banking services for private investors, their trusts and charities."

"Discretionary management will continue to be the major business activity, together with a range of complementary services, including banking, stock-broking, trust and company management and financial planning."

Mr Ingall added that Neilson Cobbold, which achieved profits of £942,000 on turnover of £4.8m in the six months to 31 March, was not expected to contribute significantly to the enlarged group in 1996. Full benefits would flow through in 1997.



By popular demand: Skoda cars helped VW to increase European market share

Healthy worldwide sales fuel VW profits surge

ELISABETH KLEIN

Volkswagen, Europe's largest car-maker, yesterday reported a huge leap in first-half net profits of DM282m (£123m), up 150 per cent from the same period last year.

Hans-Peter Blechinger, a spokesman for VW, said: "Increased sales of 14 per cent and strong earnings on financial services are the roots of the good results."

"Although competition in the market for small cars has increased incredibly, we were able to raise our share of the market in Europe from 16.7 per cent in January to 17.2 per cent in July. Compared with our competitors we did

outstandingly well." The German car-maker, which includes the Czech Skoda manufacturer, said that group income from ordinary activities, the main benchmark used by industry analysts to evaluate the company, rose 45 per cent to DM891m from DM616m last year. Volkswagen's worldwide deliveries to customers rose by 12.6 per cent to 2 million vehicles in the period.

But the car-maker is losing market share in its very own and biggest market, Germany, which accounts for 25 per cent of total sales. Here market share fell by 1.5 per cent to 27.3 per cent.

"Our German performance was below average. But in the growth markets such as Asia or South America we realised growth rates up to 36 per cent," Mr Blechinger explained.

Volkswagen was happy with its performance in the UK market. Mr Blechinger said: "We improved our market share in Britain from 4.0 per cent in the first half of 1995 to 5.41 per cent in the same period this year. This is a fantastic result - but we won't be satisfied with it for long."

Volkswagen is currently at the centre of a row between the European Union and the state of Saxony over subsidies worth billions of deutschmarks for constructing a new car-plant near Dresden.

IN BRIEF

• **Parsons Group**, the distributor of computer networks, communications and Unix products, saw its shares jump 28p to 31p after it announced a 30 per cent increase in earnings per share to 8.97p for the six months to June. Figures for the first half were heavily distorted by the acquisition at the beginning of the year of Top Log, the French computer distributor. Turnover of £65.2m in the half-year was 165 per cent higher than in 1995 and pre-tax profits 133 per cent better at £3.15m. Even at the underlying level, however, sales rose 38 per cent suggesting still strong organic growth. Wayne Channon, chairman, said: "We are pleased with the substantial progress we have made, in particular the signing of major vendors in France - these include 3Com, Bay Networks, Compaq, Microsoft and Netscape. I believe the group is stronger than it has ever been, both financially and commercially, and look forward to the future with confidence."

• **De Beers** said yesterday the Central Selling Organisation, which manages the bulk of the world's diamond sales, had been able to push prices 3 per cent higher since July, thanks to strong demand for larger stones. The increase for stones above one carat averaged 7 per cent. The retail diamond jewellery markets continued to report satisfactory sales, De Beers said, and the outlook remained positive. De Beers' comments accompanied the results for the six months to June, which showed an 18 per cent rise in attributable earnings to US\$482m and a 5.5 per cent rise in the dividend to 27 cents per linked unit. There were improvements in the diamond accounts of both De Beers and Centenary and investment income benefited from a substantial increase in the Anglo American Corporation dividend payout.

• **Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy**, the luxury goods company recorded flat sales in the first-half, mainly due to currency fluctuations and a fall in sales at the Cognac and spirits division. Group sales in the six months to June were FF13.38bn compared to FF13.34bn achieved in the same period last year. Cognac total sales rose by 13 per cent but the product mix is thought to remain unfavourable. Sales fell in the perfumes and beauty products division hit by intense competition.

• **Epwin**, a maker of PVC building products, warned that trading in the remainder of the year would remain "demanding" after the company unveiled first-half profits cut from £2.63m to £2.02m. The group said that the results were in line with expectations and included £200,000 in redundancy costs, a sum which it hoped to recoup by the year-end. The group's working capital has been reduced, with a cut in borrowings of about £2m. The full-year figures should see a return to the more traditional second-half bias, Epwin said. Meanwhile, the earnings per share fell from 8.2p to 6p, out of which an unchanged interim dividend of 2.9p is being paid.

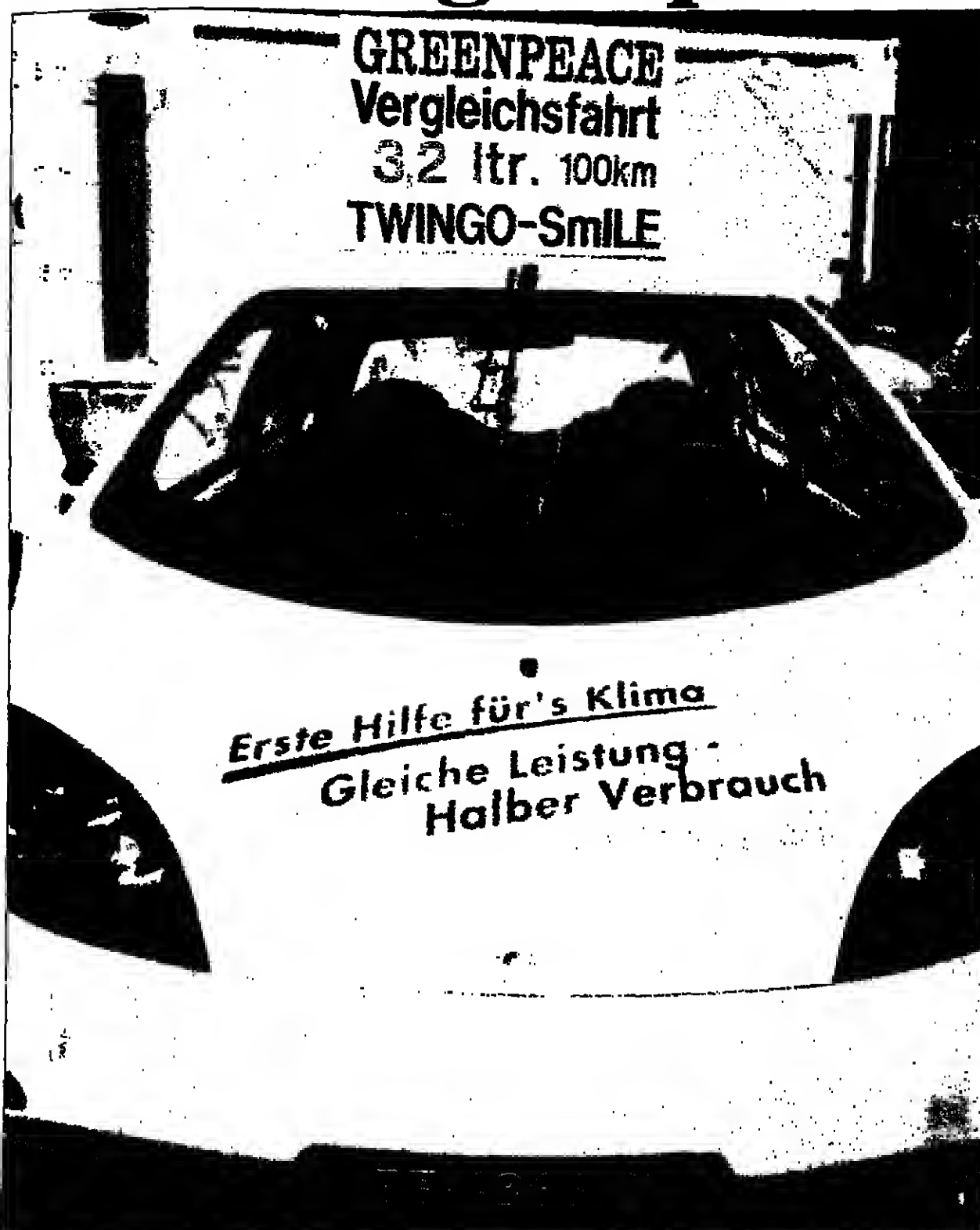
• **TBI** said all conditions relating to the acquisition of Belfast International Airport have now been either satisfied or waived. It said the acquisition is now unconditional in all respects and has been completed.

• **Bellway** is to be promoted to the FTSE250 index following the £1.67bn takeover of Southern Water by Scottish Power. The house-builder has a market value of just under £300m.

150 من الاموال

news

Why is the world's motor industry not willing to produce a car like this?



The SMILE car, a modified Renault Twingo which yesterday achieved 88 miles per gallon in a Swiss road test

NICHOLAS SCHOON.
Environment Correspondent

Greenpeace yesterday challenged Europe's car makers to slash fuel consumption and the cost of motoring when the environmental group unveiled its "Smile" car.

The "small, intelligent, light and efficient" vehicle, a modified Renault Twingo, does almost twice as many miles a gallon as its conventional counterpart and cars of similar size, without using any radical new technologies.

John Randle, a former director of engineering at Jaguar who is now a professor of automotive engineering, said the re-engineering that the environmental campaign group had achieved was "perfectly logical", and called on car makers to respond to the challenge.

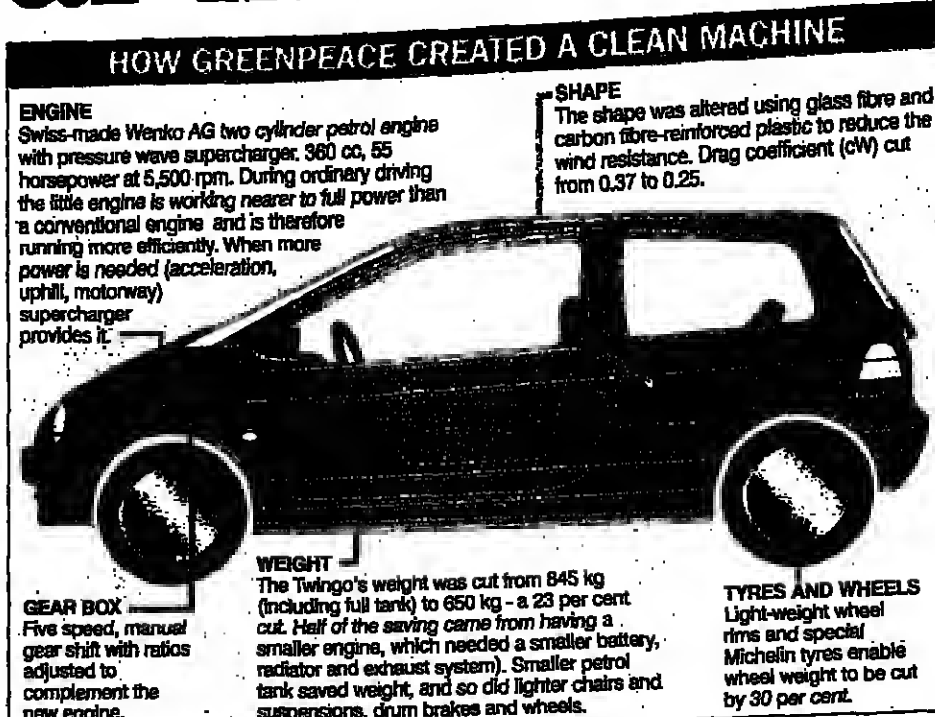
"The kind of changes that have been made here might actually make the car cheaper," he said. "At the moment we're going in the wrong direction."

In a road test in Switzerland yesterday covering a 200km course, the Smile's fuel consumption was 43 per cent less than a conventional Twingo. It also did 49 per cent better than a Ford Escort and 45 per cent better than a Volkswagen Polo.

The test, which covered urban, countryside and motorway driving, was overseen by the German certification body, TÜV, and its Swiss counterpart, EMPA, to ensure fair play. Greenpeace says its vehicle performs just as well in terms of acceleration and top speed as the ordinary Twingo - although it feels that cars should never be driven faster than 130kph (81mph).

As well as using far less petrol it also produces correspondingly less carbon dioxide - rising emissions of which are the main cause of man-made global warming, and vehicle fumes make a big contribution. It produces no more smog-causing pollutants than a Twingo, and meets the tougher European Union smog standards which come into force next year.

The vehicle represents Greenpeace's biggest and most expensive effort in "solutions-oriented campaigning" - a new



ENGINE
Swiss-made Wankel AG two cylinder petrol engine with pressure wave supercharger. 360 cc, 65 horsepower at 5,500 rpm. During ordinary driving the little engine is working nearer to full power than a conventional engine and is therefore running more efficiently. When more power is needed (acceleration, uphill, motorway) supercharger provides it.

SHAPE
The shape was altered using glass fibre and carbon fibre-reinforced plastic to reduce the wind resistance. Drag coefficient (C_D) cut from 0.37 to 0.25.

GEAR BOX
Five speed, manual gear shift with ratios adjusted to complement the new engine.

WEIGHT
The Twingo's weight was cut from 845 kg (including full tank) to 650 kg - a 23 per cent cut. Half of the saving came from having a smaller engine, which needed a smaller battery, radiator and exhaust system. Smaller petrol tank saved weight, and so did lighter chassis and suspension, drum brakes and wheels.

TYRES AND WHEELS
Light-weight wheel rims and special Michelin tyres enable wheel weight to be cut by 30 per cent.

strategy which has caused debate and conflict within the international organisation. The object is to identify solutions to environmental problems, then confront a recalcitrant industry with them.

Greenpeace picked Renault's best-selling Twingo because of its striking looks and size, very compact, but still large enough to carry an average family. Its objective was to halve its fuel consumption, but it has not yet quite achieved it.

The re-engineering was done by three Swiss companies amid considerable secrecy and the most important change was the engine. The Smile uses a four-stroke engine with two cylinders in the horizontally opposed, "boxer" position. Its capacity is just 360cc - less than one-third of the Twingo's normal engine.

The project was entirely funded and run by Greenpeace Germany, the wealthiest and best-supported of its national organisations, and it cost 2.5 million German marks (£1.1 m).

Wolfgang Lohbeck, the project leader, said: "People within Greenpeace are still saying that by making the car better we are identifying ourselves with a transport 'tool' we should be fighting. But it's impossible for us to ignore the car - we decided

we had to change it." Consumers wanted cars, and more and more would be built as markets in developing countries expanded. Greenpeace had to show how cars could be made less environmentally destructive, easily and cheaply.

"We wanted a drop-in solution, changes that could be made now without futuristic technologies," Herr Lohbeck said.

Yesterday the motor industry in Britain was unaware of the Greenpeace project - with the exception of Renault, which has given no co-operation to Greenpeace.

The Twingo has proved a runaway success on the Continent, but the French car giant has not released it in Britain as yet - although it might offer a right-hand drive version in two years' time.

Renault UK's view was that even if the modifications added only £300 to the price, that would turn away buyers. "Customers won't pay, it's as simple as that," a spokesman said.

But Professor Randle, director of Birmingham University's Automotive Engineering Centre, questioned whether the modified car would be more expensive in production. Based on Greenpeace's descriptions of

the alterations, he said he would be surprised if the car was 35 per cent more fuel-efficient overall than a conventional Twingo. But the changes were a step in the right direction.

In the past six years the average car has become about 30 per cent heavier and fuel efficiency - which improved drastically in the early Eighties - has stagnated or even declined, because of extra safety equipment such as side-impact protection bars, and the public's perceived demand for higher specifications (such as electrically operated windows) and performance.

Europe's leading car engineering consultancy, Ricardo, which is based in Shoreham-on-Sea, West Sussex, said the Smile car's achievements were not remarkable.

"These fuel savings are good, but they have been bettered by the car manufacturers - they know about this kind of technology," a spokesman said. So why were such cars not built? "That's for the manufacturers to answer."

Thilo Bode, executive director of Greenpeace International, said: "The car industry is obstructing feasible technology which would help prevent climate change."



Above: General Motors electric car, EV1, which goes on sale in the US in October. Below: British Leyland's ultra fuel efficient concept car, ECV-3, of 1982



Would motorists pay more to save the world?

NICHOLAS SCHOON

According to Greenpeace, its SMILE car would cost about 12 per cent more than a conventional Twingo - or around £870 extra - if it went into mass production.

Would anyone buy it? If they were economists, driving the annual average mileage or more, they would - because the extra price would be covered by fuel

savings in two years or less. If they were environmentalists who could justify owning a car at all, they certainly would.

The SMILE (which Greenpeace originally wanted to call the Gringo) produces fewer smog pollutants, such as oxides of nitrogen and hydrocarbons. More importantly, it cuts emissions of carbon dioxide by over 40 per cent.

But what about the ordinary motorist? The car industry claims it knows its market inside out, and the public are not prepared to pay extra for such a car in an extremely competitive marketplace.

Industry experts also questioned whether drivers would like the feel and sound of a two-cylinder engine. But none of them doubted the technical achievements which Greenpeace Germany's deutchmarks have purchased from Swiss engine and car designers.

Europe's car manufacturers have promised national governments and the European Commission to cut the fuel consumption of the average new car by 10 per cent between the early 1990s and 2005. The SMILE goes way beyond that. But it does not quite win the holy grail for the industry, which has been set at 3 litres to cover 100 kilometres. The German industry, by far Europe's largest, may begin manufacturing "micro cars", urban runabouts, which achieve that, in a few years' time.

But if such vehicles only fill a niche market, then they will not bring down the average fuel efficiency. The industry has been telling the EU Commission that an average of 5 litres per 100 km for all new cars cannot be delivered by 2010.

Ever since the first oil price shock of 1973 manufacturers have been showing off concept cars with dramatically improved fuel efficiency. But, with very few exceptions, no prototype has come anywhere near mass production. In California, local laws make it mandatory for manufacturers to market a certain proportion of ultra-low emission vehicles. But the imposition of this law has been put back from 1998.

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Semi-Detached Bungalow: ☐ Flat/Maisonette: ☐
Other: ☐ Please specify: _____
Approximately when was it built? Pre 1920 ☐ 1920-1945 ☐ 1946-1979 ☐ 1980-Present ☐
H 3824

Please tick the type of cover for which you would like a quotation:
Home Contents Cover ☐
Buildings Cover ☐

Answer YES to the following and you could save up to 15% on your Contents premium.

Does your home have an alarm? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Is it a 5-lever mortice lock fitted to the front door? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Are all other external doors fitted with key-operated locks or bolts? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Are secure key-operated locks fitted to all accessible windows? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you an active member of a Police Approved Neighbourhood Watch Scheme? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

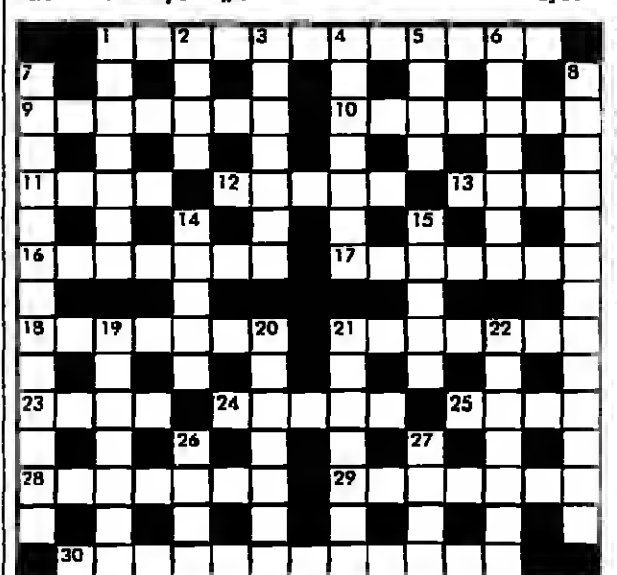
For insurance on listed buildings, those of non-standard construction, flats and maisonettes, or if you are the landlord of the property to be insured, please telephone 0800 414 525 ext 3824 for your quote or tick the box for further details ☐

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3065, Wednesday 14 August

By Phil

Tuesday's Solution



- ACROSS**
- Playing music without study, and sounding unhappy about the pace (5-7)
 - Student, looking less well-fed, receiving second instalment of grant (7)
 - Lady's mantle: most of fur is skin of sable (7)
 - A cuckoo, on reflection, is a fish? (4)
 - Soldier's allowed a waistcoat (5)
 - What sounds like top dog (4)
 - Picture Shakespeare's warring family (not upper-class) (7)
 - Deception: misleading the girls? That's not right (7)
 - Confectionery that is second in range (7)
 - Soundtrack getting a company to import a Caribbean drink (7)
 - Soundtrack snatching King or Ace? (4)
 - Clues given on the radio to part of college name (5)
 - Lincoln died in his sleep? (4)
 - Train driver perhaps left mother stuck in wet weather (7)
 - Fish for English sailor when on board (5-4)
 - Secure cable after accident on stern of frigate - a notorious case (5,7)
 - Mum taking girl on the river (7)
 - Passed on - on into confines of grave (4)
 - Motor - see it burn out before end of race (7)
 - Have a good effect, changing leader or ruler (7)
 - Regular payment to suffice, lease being reduced (4)
 - Savings one would be cuckoo to get rid of? (4-3)

- DOWN**
- The longest at No. 1? (3-4,6)
 - Person ticked off after taking drug in part of hotel (9,4)
 - Jazz player has one entering the floor (5)
 - Certainly restricting a King's lifespan in most cases (5)
 - Bullfight - girl gets to go round free (7)
 - Tin cans constructed of tin? (7)
 - Advice to have effect mostly individual stops short (7)
 - Driver finishing early, before time - the idiot (7)
 - I'm enthralled by Hosea, Moses - or another OT prophet (4)
 - Part of engine that makes vehicle black (4)

سكنا من الامم